

Upper Moreland Township Fire Services Study

Prepared for: The Board of Commissioners
and
Township Manager

Completed: 02 June 2021
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Introduction

The primary purpose of this fire protection assessment is to provide the Township Administration and Board of Commissioners with the information required to make sound operational decisions. A number of recommendations, as well as background information and justifications, are described. Surveys, interviews, observation and data review are woven into the body of the report. Additionally, practical information concerning best practices, benchmarking similar jurisdictions and raw data is included in the report or in the attachments for more granular details.

Executive Summary

The following section summarizes my findings and key concerns at the strategic level. The Report provides more detailed information on industry standards and best practices that help to provide guidance on proposed policy and programmatic changes over the next several years.

Career Staff:

Background:

- A captain and 4 firefighters staff the department Monday-Friday, 6:00am to 6:00pm. This program has been in place since 1989 and provides a very capable and experienced rapid response to emergencies.

Strengths:

- The current staff have valuable institutional memory, are committed to the Township and the fire service, have significant experience and intervene in emergencies with little help or assistance on a regular basis.

Concerns:

- Three of the staff have indicated that they plan to retire soon. If not addressed soon, this will leave a significant void, since there are no other firefighters responding during the daytime.
- There is a need for the career staff to conduct hands-on training, and to be more helpful to the volunteers with logistical duties, including planning training sessions etc.
- There is a need to embrace opportunities to be more productive. Additionally, they need to resume the more traditional duties performed by fire marshals in other municipalities, such as formal plan reviews, block checks, etc.
- Increased communications, both formal and informal, between career staff and with all members of the Fire Co is desirable

Short term recommendations:

- Develop a contingency plan in case the decline in responders can not be overcome, including adding 10 additional part time staff as a stop gap measure if immediately needed

- Hire a Fire Chief to provide leadership and manage the department's recruiting and retention programs
- Establish a joint training committee and help with the execution of the training program.
- Encourage a more inclusive, positive and accountable management style
- Take advantage of every opportunity to be engaged with the community through a structured outreach program to provide public safety education, recruitment, etc.
- Recognize that, as of now, the career staff's role is to supplement and provide assistance the volunteers when possible

Long Term Recommendations:

- Plan for a second platoon to work 12 hour nights, Sunday to Thursday if needed
- Identify additional interruptible duties to enhance productivity and added-value of on-duty crews
- Provide facility upgrades to support career and/or volunteer duty crews
- Consider a deputy chief position for management (especially emergency response) continuity and to develop an enhanced Community Risk Reduction capability.

Volunteer Staff:

- Background: The Willow Grove Volunteer Fire Co. provides the main firefighting and emergency services "force" in the Township. Like many volunteer fire companies, they are operating at an increased number of calls and doing so with a reduced number of personnel. Attempted incentive programs have met with limited success. There is significant discord within the rapidly diminishing ranks that contribute to recruiting and retention difficulties.

Strengths:

- Nucleus of dedicated personnel who strive to keep the response to night time and weekends viable.
- There are a number of experienced and skilled members who can help provide a foundation for future leadership positions
- There are strong relationships with nearby fire companies
- Certification standards are rigorous

Concerns:

- Daytime staffing is non-existent
- Personnel strength has dropped from a recent high of 23 to less than 10 in 2020. Not all of those 10 are qualified firefighters.
- Response times at night and weekends can be excessive and crews are often understaffed.
- Covid has impacted important training and there is a need for hands on critical skills practice
- Initial training requirements and officer credentials (set by Township)

may need to be adjusted to get additional personnel engaged and to provide additional competition for leadership positions, which is currently extremely limited

- Survey results indicate a great deal of discord and hostility , impacting recruitment, retention and operations

Short term:

- Implement a meaningful financial incentive program
- Organize a stipend program for dedicated duty crews from home and duty crew time at the stations.
- Formalize a recruitment and retention program involving community outreach, social media platforms and financial incentives. Consider a SAFER grant to help fund
- Officers should be integrated into the Township recognized chain of command based on merit as determined by the established standards and the Fire Chief
- Provide facility improvements in order to incentivise personnel to be in the station(s)
- Enhance the training program, especially critical incident practice and drills
- Facilitate a general meeting with all volunteer and career staff to air concerns and craft a work plan for correcting hostile environment
- Partner with career staff on a joint training committee. Training should be the same with career and volunteers.
- Participate with career staff on all joint operational suggestions and decisions

Long Term:

- Expand the duty crew concept to “in station” crews
- Complete major capital improvements to the stations or consider new modern facility in a more centralized location
- Work with the Township and Fire Co leadership to have an annual formal recognition event with awards, speaker, etc.
- If recruitment and retention efforts are not successful, recognize continued adjusted role as a supplemental firefighting force

Township

Short Term

- Select a Fire Chief
- Consider an incentive budget
- Craft a General Orders/Policy Manual
- Consider facility improvements
- Consider a recognition program

Long Term:

- Prepare for a second platoon of career firefighters for initial response at night
- Consider a strategic plan that includes a new emergency services headquarters with shared and regional potential use
- If needed, expand and enhance volunteer stipend program in conjunction with expanded use of part time firefighters to cover nights and weekends

- Consider a regional alignment with other municipalities to share duty crew and rapid response capabilities
- Consider other options as outlined in this report, including providing living quarters in exchange for on duty commitment

Background

The Upper Moreland Twp. Fire Department (UMFD) struggles to function as a team or as a single fire fighting force. There is a level of tension and discord that is affecting the ability to recruit and retain quality personnel. While there are a significant number of experienced, high performing members of the department, comprising career (full time) and volunteers, they often do not operate in a blended, or even a coordinated manner. The department has lacked a department head leader for about 8 years, leading to some atrophy, inconsistent service delivery, role confusion, and unnecessary discord. There is an on-going rift between stations, day, night and generations. There are not enough firefighters.

The nucleus of dedicated volunteers is struggling to cover night time calls with adequate staffing as well as responding in a timely manner. It's been difficult to retain some members who do not feel valued and this is exacerbated by unclear policies, "seat of the pants" decisions, policy directives that are received by some as unilateral, unfair or arbitrary.

This department personnel, both career and volunteer, live a life of duty and sacrifice in service to this Township. They all care and want to be the best. There is a great deal of experience and talent in the ranks. But, many are frustrated at the lack of unity and the weight of needing to be constantly available to respond due to staffing shortages. The leaders are carrying an undue burden trying to be as effective as possible.

The Fire Department is a critical municipal service that is challenged by the out of date model that the volunteers will maintain constant availability to answer the call. It's no longer the case and change is needed if the volunteers are to remain an effective firefighting force that the Township can count on. The Township should consider taking a more active role in support, recognition and management of this crucial service.

Fire Protection Overview

1. The public's expectation for service from local government has increased significantly and when they call 911, they expect that some highly capable, well trained individuals will respond very quickly and solve their problem
2. The national trend of declining volunteerism, not only in the fire service but in most community organizations, is having a very negative impact. The reasons have been discussed in prior reports and are outlined in the 1989 Report to The Commissioners.
3. There are not enough volunteers. There are none responding during the daytime and not nearly enough at night. This is a risky business model and causes serious stress on those that continue to serve
4. The UMFD is a combination department, consisting of both career professionals and volunteer professionals. Both are needed for the department to meet its mission. If a sufficient number of new volunteers can not be recruited, there needs to be additional career staff hired.
5. Fire departments respond to fires, but also a myriad of other incidents, including hazardous materials leaks or spills, technical rescue, flood rescue and mitigations, car crashes, critical medical emergencies, severe storms, etc. These require additional training and skilled leadership.

6. Combination departments are complex and require leaders who are sensitive to the needs of the various segments. Developing professional relations and having the correct temperament is essential to success.
7. Increasing and enhancing the volunteer component will delay the need for additional career staff, which is extremely expensive.
8. Enhancing the volunteer ranks has a cost, but it is far cheaper than transitioning to a fully paid department.
9. The transition to more career staffing is not necessarily linear, but can happen unpredictably based on personnel changes or conditions (such as a pandemic). Contingencies may need to be planned for in the budgeting process
10. This department needs a full time fire chief, who can bring the factions together, increase communications, support the efforts of both the volunteers and career firefighters to grow the ranks and provide overall leadership to help this department retain its status as a highly reliable community asset.
11. All of the recommendations that follow in the report require a high energy, enthusiastic, technically skilled fire chief who will manage the overall fire, rescue, emergency management and fire marshal responsibilities that are entrusted to the Township government.

Recommendations

The priority, high level recommendation is to recruit a Township Chief of Fire and Emergency Services (Fire Chief) with the following in a general prioritized order::

1. Develop a more formalized recruiting and retention plan that incorporates monetary and other incentives for duty crews, in station and from home, to enhance night time response and most importantly, an immediate response.
2. Develop a succession plan for the three career staff who indicate they are planning on retiring soon. This will be a major loss of institutional knowledge.
3. Secure at least 10 additional part time firefighters in order to maintain minimal staffing and be part of a contingency plan if needed for immediate supplemental staffing
4. Develop an updated Standard Operating Guidelines, a General Orders (Policies) Manual and Special Orders.
5. Support the training program through the development of a Training Committee composed of career and volunteer members with an interest in training. Career staff will need to assist with logistics, set up, contacts etc. There is an immediate need for “mayday”, accountability, Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVOC) , active shooter and self-rescue training for every member.
6. Develop a comprehensive internal communications process where all members have input to decisions where appropriate and everyone is made aware of current events and changes. The WGVFC Board, which has elected representatives from all fire company factions, could serve as a formal advisory council to the Fire Chief.
7. Post Covid, re-energize community outreach, in collaboration with police, ems and other community partners.

8. Develop a Township “command authority” organizational structure that places members into positions of leadership based on merit, not popular elections.
9. Review opportunities for increased productivity and support of volunteers during the day shift.
10. Pursue agency accreditation in 3-5 years
11. Transition this department to a truly blended department: *One Mission-One Department-Protecting and Serving with Pride.*
12. Prepare contingency plans utilizing increased full time staffing on nights and weekends in case the recruiting and retention attempts are not successful. There are several staffing models that have been developed and are available if needed
13. Consider capital improvements to the stations and/or consider a central station near York and Terwood and close the two stations at the extreme boundaries of the Township
14. With a new Fire Chief on board, consider a regional approach to the staffing shortages by engaging Hatboro, Horsham Lower Moreland and Bryan Athen to discuss a shared solution. All of these municipalities are experiencing similar staffing shortages and a regional approach may well be the most economical and efficient solution.

Issues of Concern

1. There are serious staffing shortages, daytime, nights and weekends, with no easy fix
2. Adequate staffing and response times at night and weekends is often not consistent or reliable
3. Daytime response is totally limited to career staff, with a crew of four or five
4. There is a lack of documented training in critical incidents, known as low frequency, high consequence events, such as active shooter, mayday, self rescue, etc
5. Fortunately, there is a core group of dedicated and positive members who can form the nucleus of an enhanced approach to recruiting and retaining members
6. Most municipalities in the county are experiencing similar problems. These municipalities all count on each other for mutual aid and the lack of staffing in the departments that we count on for help exacerbates the current staffing issues

There is a need for change, and with change, there is hope that the volunteer system can continue to serve the Township. But the change comes at a cost, but much more reasonable cost than even a minimally staffed full time, or mostly full time department.

Transition Progression Graphic



Discussion

The expectation for a high level of performance and competence for services from local government continues to increase. The public expects their municipality and their operational entities to quickly and efficiently solve their problems, or at least help them. This is especially true in the public safety space. A call placed to 911 requires an immediate response by a sufficient force of trained, equipped and knowledgeable First Responders. And, they need to be prepared to face any number of possible contingencies. While Upper Moreland maintains excellent apparatus and equipment, it currently lacks sufficient personnel to staff more than one truck and sometimes, not even that.

Much of what they are expected to do at the scene of a fire, car crash, cardiac arrest, chemical spill, entrapped person or any one of a number of possible categories of calls they respond to is labor intensive. There is no getting around the fact that an adequate number of personnel are required to perform needed tasks in a timely manner to bring an uncontrolled or escalating emergency under control. For house fires, 15 qualified firefighters on scene within nine minutes should be considered the response goal.

It has become increasingly clear that the model of community members volunteering at the local firehouse is no longer working in many communities, including Upper Moreland. The current model is not sustainable. Change is required in order to survive as a highly reliable community asset.

This study does not dwell on the reasons why it is so difficult to recruit and retain adequate numbers of volunteers. Much has been written about that and is explained in detail in the 1989 Report to The Commissioners. In Pennsylvania alone, according to the Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute, the number of volunteer firefighters in the Commonwealth decreased from about 300,000 in the 1970's to about 38,000 in 2018. At the same time, the state's population has increased by about 9%. Added to the usual reasons for diminishing numbers of volunteers is the stringent training regiments now in place in many fire companies. It has created a quagmire that may be overly restrictive in our attempts to attract new members. This was reflected in the surveys that were returned. Flexibility and "equivalencies" must be considered and should be a priority of the new Fire Chief.

How much fire protection is needed? In Upper Moreland, there has been a very proactive fire and construction code program. The fire and code enforcement professional staff, with the support of the elected officials, have in place a relatively restrictive sprinkler requirement. Many of the former buildings that lacked automatic fire protection have been replaced with fire resistive, sprinklered, alarmed buildings that will likely not be a major fire hazard if the aggressive inspection programs continue as a priority. Fire codes are not self-enforcing and a municipal presence, through the inspection programs in place, will help to ensure that all fire protection systems remain in working order. The fire risk profile of the township has improved dramatically in recent years, enhancing survivability and reducing out of control fires.

There are still plenty of buildings that would require a large manual firefighting presence, as well as thousands of housing units. There are many apartments that have historically been the scene of major and fatal fires. The need is still for a response by firefighters, but the need

now is for certifications in various fire code and inspection subjects as well as firefighting. This is an important area for the career staff to focus on and there may be some value in blending fire code enforcement, administratively, with the Code Enforcement department. There is also an opportunity for career firefighters to be trained to assist the Code Enforcement Dept with routine property maintenance complaints, many of which are fire hazard related. The same software program can be utilized to ensure assignment and follow up. Codes can “assign” Code Enforcement work orders to Fire, and confirm follow up.

Of course, there are still many calls for accidents, trauma victims, cardiac arrests, persons trapped in floods, chemical and fuel related incidents etc that require a rapid and expert response. More specialized responses require highly trained teams. Urban Search and Rescue, Technical Rescue and Hazmat Teams are now county based and will integrate with the Fire Dept at the scene of critical incidents. Training for those type of incidents, low frequency-high impact/consequence, requires even more time for training. The Township has key infrastructure properties that also require planning and a state of readiness, including public and private schools, long term care facilities, churches, high rise residential complexes, utilities and medical offices, major rail and transportation corridors, among others. In addition to the thousands of residential units, single and multi-family, all of the above depend on the Township, and their fire department, to protect them and help prevent harm

It is up to the elected offices, municipal managers and the fire service leadership to create creative methods of staffing fire apparatus with qualified personnel who can arrive on time, every day and at any hour. The Commonwealth recently published SR-6 and this provides additional details on the responsibilities of local government as it relates to fire and EMS protection.

Time is the enemy when responding to structure fires, rescues and critical medical emergencies.

Some of the models that are being utilized across the state include:

- Regionalization
- Use of public works personnel (bonus pay or preferential hiring)
- Nucleus of full time staff to supplement the volunteers, usually during the daytime (Upper Moreland model)
- Overnight crews in exchange for boarding (college students)
- Paying a stipend to staff the station or guarantee response at night
- Partnering with EMS to share services
- Police/fire/EMS public safety agencies, fully or partially consolidated
- Cross trained Community Service Officers, handling animal control, parking enforcement, code enforcement between emergency calls
- Combination departments comprised of career and volunteer
- Utilizing a volunteer recruitment specialist
- Hiring a fully, or mostly career department

Some of the local municipalities that are taking proactive steps to address the staffing crisis include, among others:

- Whitpain Twp.: daytime career staff one engine, pay stipends to volunteers at night, full time fire marshal. Provides QRS response

- Montgomery Twp.: career staffing one engine during the daytime, one career chief. Conduct inspections. Fire Marshal
- Upper Providence Twp. : daytime cheer engine, full time fire marshal, chief and full time emergency manager
- Norristown: full time firefighters staff two engines with career staff 24/7, full time chief, Deputy Chief and Assistant Chiefs (shift chief)
- Pottstown: full time chief, some career staff
- East Norriton Twp.: full time director, staff daytime engine. No inspections
- Lower Merion Twp.: full time chief, 3 full time fire marshals, paid drivers at each of 7 seven stations, 24/7. No inspections, no QRS
- Horsham Twp. : two stations staffed 24/7, full time fire marshal. EMS response.
- Upper DublinTwp.: full time fire marshal/administrator, part time inspector. All others volunteer.
- Warrington Twp.:staff a daytime engine with 4, full time director/fire marshal
- Northampton Twp.: staff engine 3\24/7, pay stipends to volunteers, full time fire marshal and full time deputy fire chief. Conduct inspections and run QRS
- Upper MerionTwp.: full time chief, 2 full time fire marshals, daytime staffing of engine and ambulances, run QRS, conduct inspections. Stipend program nights and weekends.

Additional details on some of the above are provided in this report.

Operational Assessment

The Willow Grove Fire Co (WGVFC) has been the primary fire protection force since 1907. In 1989, the Commissioners took action to bolster the daytime crew, which had become depleted for a variety of reasons. This was a proactive move and the program, over the years, has been the model for many other municipalities in Montgomery and Bucks counties.

The philosophical approach was that the career staff would be used to support and bolster the volunteer force, while providing an immediate response to daytime emergencies.

The WGVFC continued to operate with reduced ranks, especially in the daytime, and additional staff was added. The daytime crew staff a single engine with an officer, driver and two firefighters. This is compliant with the National Fire Protection Association consensus standard. Another member serves as the Captain and acting Fire Marshal. There is essentially no one else from the Fire Company responding, therefore it is recommended that the preferred staffing policy of a crew of four, when possible, be maintained. With the Fire Marshal, there are actually five members on duty during the day. This provides some flexibility to staff one engine with three and another with two to provide additional services, and join together at a fire scene to work as a unit. I recommend that this flexibility be at the discretion of the Fire Chief. The two person engine, acting as a Rapid Response Unit, can take the QRS calls with two personnel rather than the current practice of sending one, which is a risk. Low acuity calls can continue to use the QRS vehicle, especially if working with less than four. If there are inspections in the Engine 10-2's first due area, they can take an engine, conduct inspection duties and be an immediate responder to calls in that area. The remaining three can meet the engine at any scene as required. This would not be a standard evolution, but an option for assignments from time to

time as warranted. In other words, there are opportunities for creative daily assignments where getting water on the fire quickly, or aiding an injured person rapidly, can be initiated with a small crew, backed up by other responders.. SOP/SOG for responding to structure fires with less than four personnel need to be developed and enforced for personnel safety. This may be preferred to having all personnel committed to a single unit at a remote location in the township for routine duties and risking an excessively long response time.

The first out engine responds to a considerable number of calls outside of Upper Moreland. This is known as automatic and mutual aid. Just as we count on our neighbors, they count on us. This needs to continue as all departments are struggling with staffing issues. However, the Captain needs to use discretion and be flexible with the staff assigned to leave town. Low acuity calls, such as fire alarms, can be handled by a crew of three, leaving two members back to form the nucleus of a crew to remain available to cover township emergencies.

Four members should respond as a unit to structure fires when possible. If the firefighter recruitment process is successful, the balance of the secondary crew may be filled with volunteers, either from home, work or from a standby status at the fire station.

The nighttime response has become increasingly problematic. While there is a nucleus of dedicated, experienced firefighters who can be counted on to respond, it's not nearly enough and they are not always available. With the summer approaching, I anticipate an even further reduction of personnel available to respond. Further complicating this response is the fact that most of those responding at night are officers, including 2 chief officers, two captains, two lieutenants and a chief engineer. While there are also a few new firefighters, the span of control is problematic. There are command officers with no one to supervise, which is a highly unusual organizational structure.

Because of this limited staffing, there are many individuals advocating for the hiring of nighttime personnel. This would allow a guaranteed crew to handle minor calls and also provide a driver and a nucleus of firefighters, hopefully supplemented by volunteers, for serious fires. It would allow a more immediate response, which is needed and sometimes not available to the residents.

At this time, the recommendation is that the Township delay hiring crews for night time response and instead implement a program of compensating volunteers for duty crews. This program will be described further in this report, but I advise to start slowly, paying a stipend for crews to be on call to respond from home and eventually, with some reconfiguring of the fire stations, provide overnight station crews for additional pay. There are other models that I will describe in some detail but I believe that the Fire Company, with municipal support and under the guidance of a Fire Chief, can continue to provide nighttime and weekend fire protection for the foreseeable future. This needs to be closely monitored and, if this cannot be rapidly accomplished, there are several other options that can be tried before committing to the need for a full time 24/7 fire department. Other options, such as renting apartments for individuals, building bunk rooms etc are all being done in this area and should be considered.

As suggested in the survey results, there is clearly a lack of communications between the various factions. This department operates as two or more departments, creating operational deficiencies. There is a strong need to be one fire department, one set of policies

and procedures and one chain of command. Currently, the Captain is operating as the Townships representative. The situation is not clear cut. It's been about eight years since the department had a department head, and the system has atrophied and gone a little off track. The Captain acts as the shift supervisor but spends much time as the Fire Marshal. He has, in the past, been identified as the acting director of emergency services.

Over time, with the ranks of the volunteers reduced, the career staff became somewhat dominant, perhaps out of necessity. The Career captain should report to the Township Fire Chief and supervise the on duty shift. The Fire Chief should create a Township Command Authority, which will be an organizational structure based on merit, not on elections. Where possible, he/she could use the elected officers of the fire company as a basis for the command authority if they are qualified.

The career staff has significant institutional knowledge, passion for the job and is greatly interested in doing a good job for the Township. They have all branched off into somewhat specialized areas, such as equipment, mapping, EMS/QRS, inspections etc. There is an opportunity to be more productive, especially after covid has subsided. They need to rotate, to some degree, their specialities so that everyone continues to learn. One of the individuals acts as a deputy fire marshal. The investigative reports that I reviewed are excellent and appear to be compliant with NFPA standards. One individual provides state of the art mapping and "pre-incident plans". There are about 360 of them and they are loaded on the in vehicle computers. However, there is a disconnect between sharing these pre-plans with all personnel and actually conducting planning sessions. Both career and volunteers need to have pre-plan orientations as part of their training plan. Following up the ones identified as most hazardous should include site familiarization tours and actually laying various hose lays so that crews simulate fighting a fire at a hazardous site before actually having to do so. This will increase effectiveness and improve interest in training nights and duty crews. This should be an on-going process.

The Township provides an annual fund of \$8,000 as an incentive based on points. It is divided among the crew, who receive checks. Only 9 individuals reached the required point totals and were able to receive significant funds. This program, while a commendable effort to help with retaining personnel, can actually work against maintaining as many members as possible. The program should be revised to incentivize firefighters who are willing to be at the station for duty crews so that stations are staffed for immediate response and it is not a fund that is divided among a small group of people. In addition to this fund, chief officers receive \$500 and the use of a departmental vehicle.

Operational Data:

2019:

- Totals Calls in Twp-511
- Average response from dispatch to onscene-392 seconds
- Weekday response from dispatch to onscene-296 seconds

- Nights/weekends average from dispatch to arrival-463 seconds
- Fire alarm calls totaled 183, (34.59%),the highest call for service. 3.68% of alarm system activations were upgraded to building fires.
- Building fires accounted for 5.67% of calls. There were 30 building fire calls, including 4 fires that were elevated to a higher alarm, or 13.33%.
- The percentage of building fires that originate as fire alarms were 1.323% of alarm calls.

2020:

- Total calls in Twp. 572
- Average time from dispatch to arrival-468
- Average weekday response 329 seconds
- Average nights/weekends dispatch to arrival-572 seconds
- Fire alarm calls totaled 193, (34.47%) the highest call for service. Four of those were upgraded to a building fire
- Building fires accounted for 36 calls (6.19%). Five (2.07%) of those were significant enough for an elevated response.
- The percentage of building fires originating as fire alarms totaled 0.687%

2021:

- Total calls in Twp. ytd 157
- Average response time from dispatch to arrival-398 seconds
- Average weekday response from dispatch to arrival-315 seconds
- Average nights/weekends response time from dispatch to arrival-478 seconds
- Alarm systems again were the highest response, totaling 52 ytd, or 31.52%
- Building fires totaled 10.91%, with 2 confirmed as working fires.
- The number of fire alarms upgraded to a building fire was three, or 5.45%The percentage of of all calls that were building fires that originated as fire alarms was 1.818%

Calls are in Upper Moreland only, and do not include mutual aid calls.
Source is MCDPS, Technology Services Division.

Organizational Structure

Upper Moreland, in 1989, named a committee to study the daytime response deficiency and recommended options to the Commissioners. This report resulted in the hiring of three, full time,paid career firefighters. The objective, at that time, was to provide an initial, rapid response during the daytime, when staffing was critically short. That part of the program has been very successful. There is today a rapid response of an appropriately staffed engine to emergency calls, well within consensus standards. The crews are experienced and well trained. The other elements of the program included supporting the volunteers in a number of ways in order to deploy the need for additional paid staff. The daytime career staff would help with training, conduct a proactive inspection program, provide immediate aid to people in critical medical

events while assisting the ambulance crew, conduct community outreach, care for the Fire Dept assets etc. Much of these tasks are occurring, but all need some realignment. In some ways, the career staff have reversed the philosophy that the objective was to help retain volunteers by handling much of the mundane tasks and by providing “staff” support.

During the past eight years, there has been a vacancy in the Director of Emergency Services position, as provided in the Township Code. This absence has led to some programmatic confusion as to roles and duties. In the absence of a Twp. department head, the career captain has endeavored to make sure all Township mandates are being met and that the department is in a state of readiness. With his role being somewhat unclear, as well as his concern over staffing deficiencies, there is a sense of resentment from some quarters.

On the volunteer side, there are very few members responding to night time calls and few who are eligible to compete for officer ranks. There is little competition due to very strenuous requirements. While having certifications and advanced training is desirable, it has created a quagmire that restricts who can be in a leadership position, or even a member.. This will be an area of priority for the new Fire Chief position. It can be addressed by adding in some flexibility in time to complete requirements, determining equivalent training background, and by conducting in-house training and drills that address the same content that are in the certification programs.

There is a small group of volunteers who form the core of the evening and night time response crews. They hold one duty night per week (several members attend) and there is one training night. Some members enthusiastically attend, others attend but do not participate and others seem to have “dropped out”. There are often not enough volunteers for full scale realistic, scenario based training evolutions or for in-station duty crews on most nights, which is needed for an immediate response. This is a major area for improvement. Starting small, with an incentive program that is described in the report, may improve attendance. The duty crew concept, with monetary incentive, can extend to overnight commitments from home until appropriate sleeping quarters are constructed. This will need to be an evolutionary process.

The Fire Co has a Board of Directors and Relief Association Board. They are a major presence in the firehouse and make decisions regarding the fire company owned assets and have some role in approving directives. The fire company line (operations) officers, Relief Board and board of Directors are mostly the same small group of people, many no longer respond to calls. This adds to some resentment and frustration by those who still respond. There are directives and standard operating guidelines that are issued by the township, some by the volunteer fire chief, and some by the Fire Co Board. Some SOPs on the bulletin board are over 20 years old. This serves to further divide the company and cause confusion. This hodge podge of SOPs, directives, etc will need to be addressed by the Fire Chief, as described in the section on the Township Command Authority.

Some of the members are sensitive to trying to bring the company together. COVID has been a real obstruction to this process. There are not nearly enough occasions for building camaraderie, teambuilding, training and fellowship, etc. There are cliques and these are always destructive in a fire company. . Some don't feel welcome in one station or the other. There are reports that potential applicants are ignored, or not made to feel welcome, and eventually leave. The fire company did reach out to another fire company to learn more about their mentorship program, and they have some type in place, but it does seem to get much

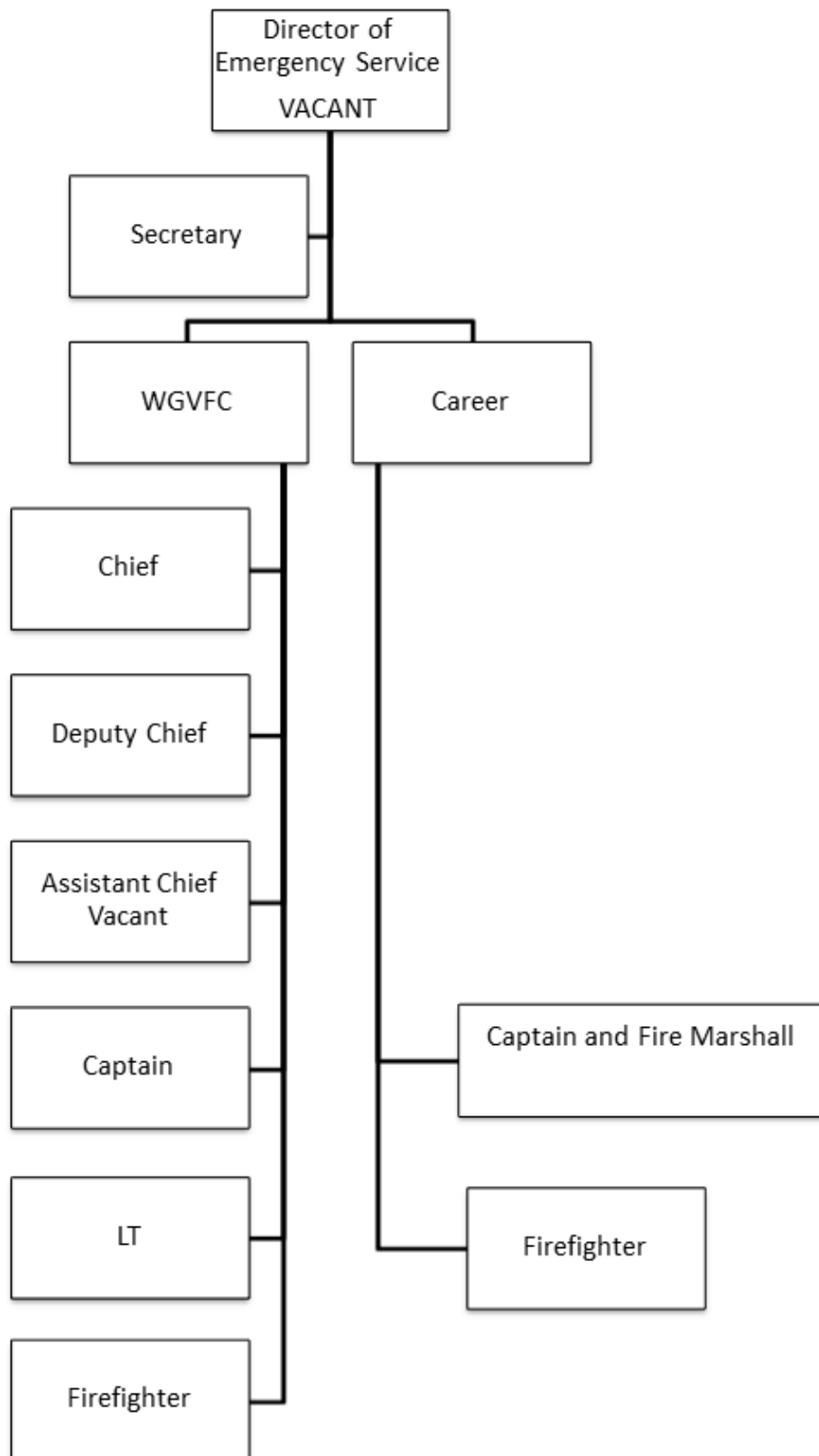
traction. They do have an excellent manual for applicants that walk them through the basics. This is an outstanding way to provide direction and a welcome to potential candidates.

I have been unable to locate a WGVFC mission statement or a vision statement. There does not seem to be any established goals that everyone buys into.

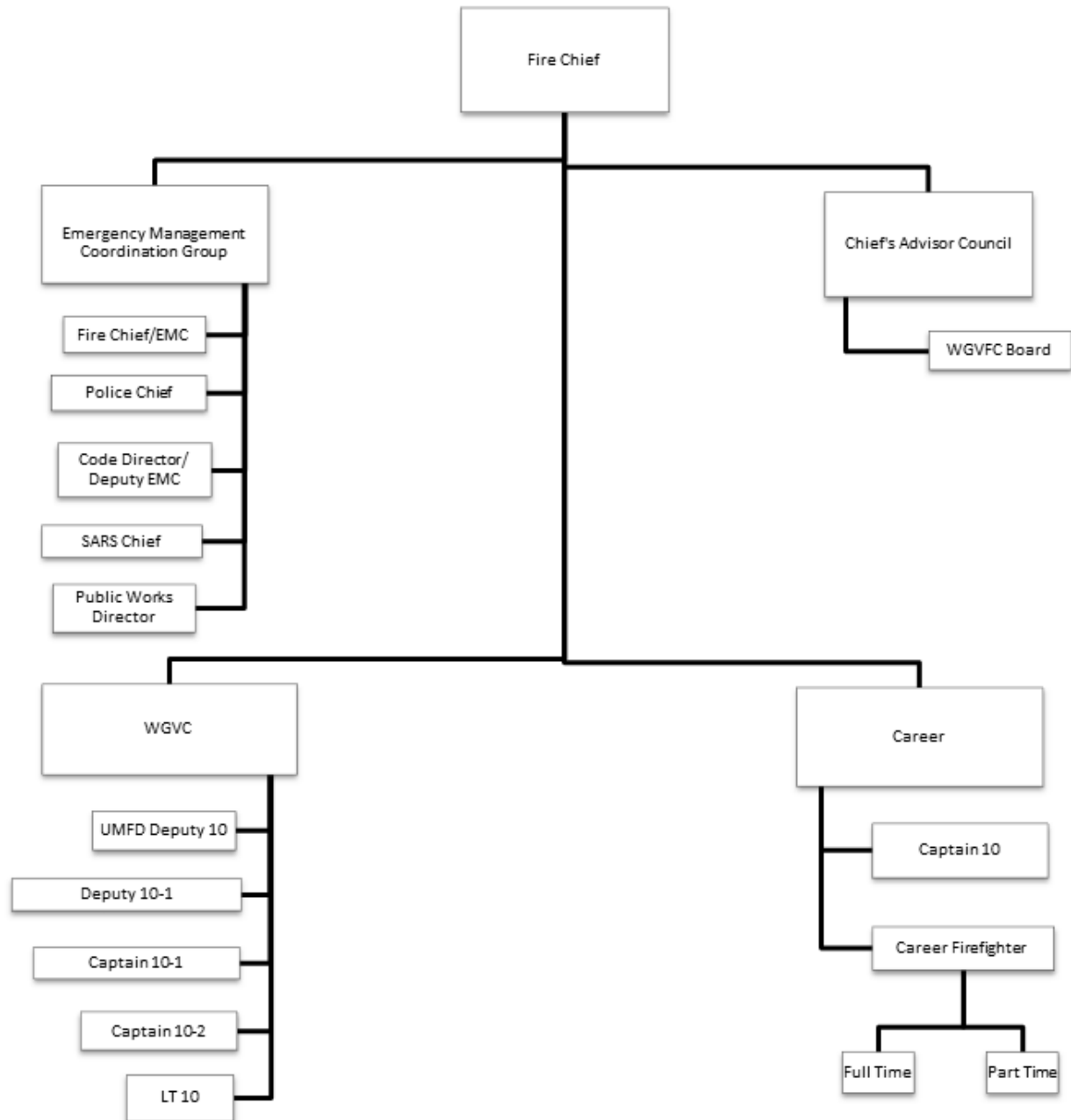
A few overarching goals to consider and build on include:

1. Departmental accreditation is desirable. This should be staff assignment for the career staff and would take several years to accomplish
2. Establish a formal community outreach program and take advantage of every opportunity to interact with the public in a positive way, such as school programs, demonstrations, national night out, etc.
3. The proposed Fire Chief should, in collaboration with municipal leaders and fire service stakeholders, develop a Standard of Cover and a strategic plan for 3-5 years.

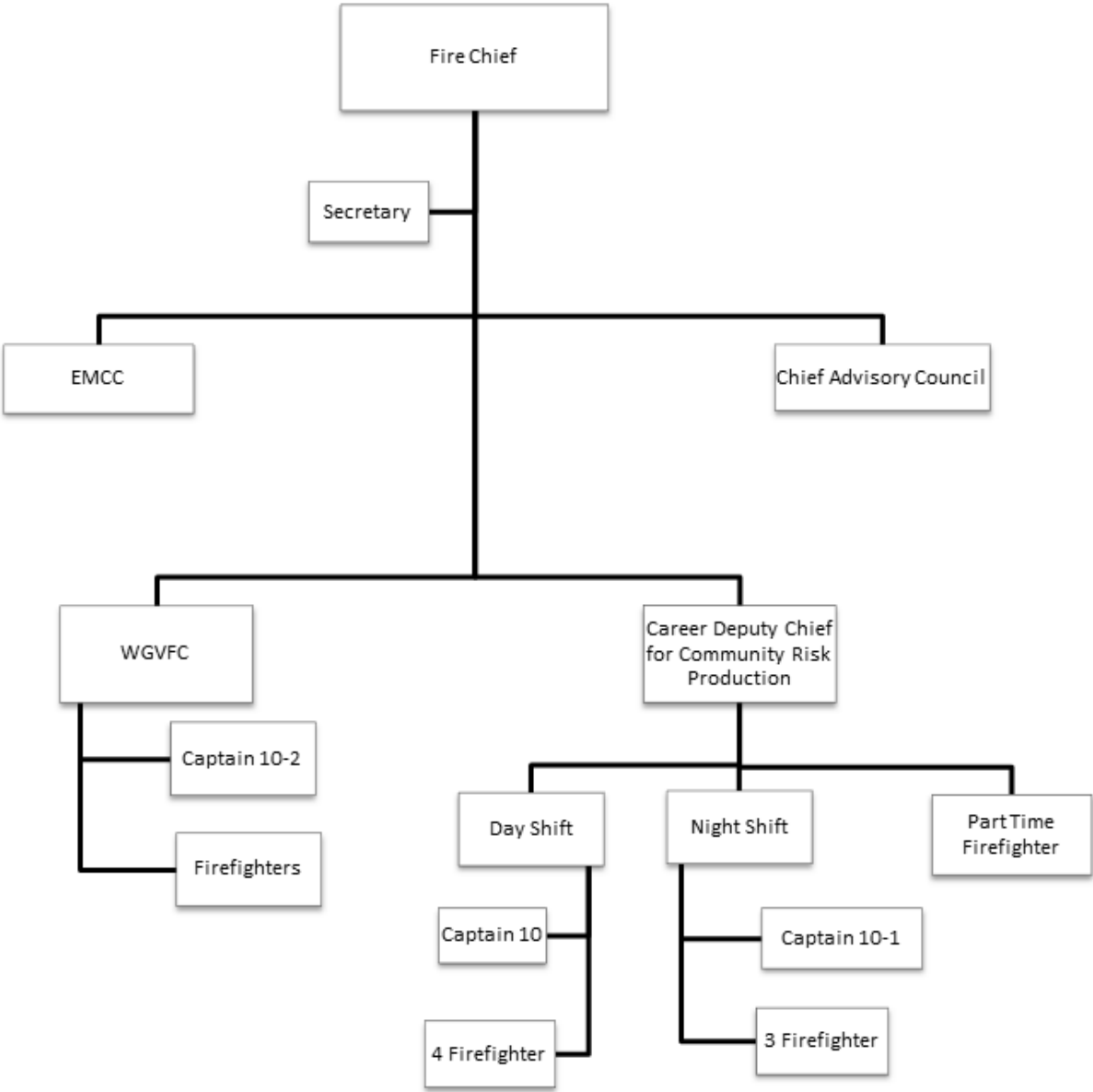
Current Organized Chart



Proposed Organizational Chart



Future Organized Chart if Needed



Current and Future Staffing Considerations

The UMFD/WGVFC uses Emergency Reporting to document fire service activities. Additionally, the MDCPS and the Relief Board produce data and statistics. The career staff are primarily responsible for the collection, input and posting of data. Dozens of pages of reports were reviewed and for the purposes of this report, only the staffing data is critical. All of the other information, such as response times, on scene time to get water on the fire, training certifications, all revolve around adequate staffing. The available staffing trend, as provided by the Willow Grove Fire Company Relief Association Membership Statistics, is as follows:

2010	18
2011	22
2012	19
2013	21
2014	23
2015	16
2016	16
2017	18
2018	19
2019	11
2020	10
2021	12

Note 1: The WGVFC data indicates there are a total of 10 firefighters who meet minimal standards currently available for firefighting duty between two stations, down from about 15 last year. On a positive note, as this report is being finalized, there are 4 candidates scheduled to begin basic fire training (FF1).

Note 2: some of these are fire police and are not firefighters. There are several probationary firefighters as well.

Call data for the past five years indicates a drop of all calls for service from a high of 1366 to 904 in 2020.

Very few volunteer or combination departments have the personnel to handle major fires, or working fires on a regular basis, without outside assistance. There is a great dependency on mutual aid. Communities, much more than ever before, respond routinely into neighboring jurisdictions to assist. Additionally, many types of incidents that first responders now face are “ joint agency “ events, involving fire, police, EMS, hazmat, tech rescue, medical and emergency management at several levels. Often, in well managed agencies, non-governmental agencies such as the Red Cross, and faith based groups are a welcomed part of the public safety response enterprise.

Most events are minor, especially if addressed quickly, and do not require large numbers of personnel. Others can be labor intensive. Of course, no one knows when those major incidents will occur. Upper Moreland Twp has experienced very destructive events in recent

years. With the mitigation efforts of the Township in flood control , rapid response of police, fire and EMS as well as proactive Code Enforcement, there are less significant events (but many more calls for service) than in recent history. But, high impact events do occur, and fire and police agencies can never have enough staff to handle every contingency. But there are methods that will help, in a cost effective way, to have staffing ready for a rapid and coordinated response at all times.

Daytime service is provided by the career staff, almost exclusively. No volunteers are currently available to respond. The volunteer members do not have to leave their jobs or family to handle the myriad of calls for service during the daytime. The Township counts on mutual aid during the day and night. The mutual aid companies are also experiencing similar staffing issues to a greater or lesser extent, adding to the uncertainty of an adequate and safe response. Here are some of the types of incidents that this department has responded to in recent years:

- House fires with fatalities
- Gas explosions with fatalities
- Building fires with deaths and injuries
- Church fires
- Industrial fires
- High angle rescues
- Mass shooting
- Explosion with multiple fatalities
- Cyanide leaks
- Chlorine leaks
- Technical rescues
- Turnpike fatal rescues
- Train incidents
- Car bombing
- Airplane, helicopter and jet crashes
- Structural collapse
- Destructive tornadoes
- Widespread and prolonged power outages
- Blizzards
- Heat emergencies
- Pandemics
- High-rise fires
- Water rescues
- Car in flood rescues
- Fatal industrial accidents
- Hostage situations
- Arsons
- Lost and missing vulnerable persons searches
- Suicides
- Major fuel spills
- Flammable gas leaks
- Cardiac arrests
- Stabbings
- Mass casualty incidents
- Electric shock/electrocution
- Trapped by machinery
- WMD suspicious packages
- High wind/wind shear destruction
- Street flooding
- Lightning strikes
- Burn victims
- Destructive tornadoes

From the survey responses as well as interviews, many indicated that it was time to expand the career staffing to night time as well. It is generally agreed that the volunteer system we once knew is in the past. No longer are people interested in volunteering for community organizations, especially the fire service. Recruiting programs are only marginally successful in many cases. But, presenting a polished image, promoting the department at community events, word of mouth, etc can all be factors in attracting new members, but again, not in any numbers that will change the system back to the way it was. Recruiting and retention programs alone may not be able to hold off the eventual need for career staffing around the clock. Instead, we need to do everything possible to enhance the volunteer experience by offering incentives, providing a positive and supportive environment and engaging all members in the entire organization.

Leadership must address cliques and also work to reduce or eliminate unproductive discussions on the engine room floor. There needs to be an affirmative effort to bring in friends

etc. Recruiting is an everyday task, not just from time to time. Below are several suggestions for considerations:

1. Consider a system where experienced or returning members can be fast tracked by a refresher training program, This may require a new membership category. These individuals may be embedded into the duty crew system if qualified.
2. Initiate a formal mentoring program, utilizing members who have the temperament to encourage membership
3. Consider an expanded membership category that limits members to exterior, or support operations. This “yellow helmet” program may assist with fire stations as well as fire scene tasks to allow black helmets to handle more critical needs. They should not be counted as part of the crew but can ride when there is room.
4. The proposed “reserve member” category, recently approved by the WGVFC Board, is used to help supplement staffing in other communities and may help.
5. Training requirements may need to be modified to attract new members. Senior members who return for duty crews, should be fast tracked through a refresher program and updated with frequent “skills” type in house training.
6. An enhanced stipend program, as described in this report, should be introduced as soon as possible.
7. Pay for on duty, in the station and/or at home stand by time should be initiated as soon as possible. Credit/pay for on-duty or do-call status is more important than a point system for calls and should be implemented.
8. Provide a financial bonus to members who bring in new members and complete training.
9. Proactively attend community events with a professionally appearing display, business like hand out material, and “recruiter” with the temperament to spread the word about the positive experiences of being a member.
10. Work with a videographer to produce an updated, professionally produced recruiting video. See Montgomery Township, Flourtown and others as models. This has been tried in the past with little follow through.
11. Apply for a SAFER grant to pay for stipends, recruiting and retention costs. This was tried before with inadequate follow up, requiring grant funds to be returned. The Township may be able to assist and manage this process.
12. Long term consider a regional approach to duty crew staffing, starting with weekends. Hatboro, Lower Moreland, Upper Moreland and Horsham could share duty crew duties and expand as appropriate. This is done in the Collegeville area now and is worth monitoring for success.
13. Prepare a contingency plan to hire 4 additional career firefighters to cover Mon-Fri, 6:00pm to 6:00am, utilizing volunteers on weekends and for second and third trucks, if it becomes needed.
14. An Annual Firefighter Recognition Day, with the Commissioners presenting merit awards and bonuses, would be well received. This could be incorporated with a holiday lunch, a guest speaker, etc.

Staffing Options

As depicted in the chart in the Summary Section, the progression timeline for this department could roughly follow this path without quickly growing the ranks of the volunteer force.

1. Initiate and manage a "full court press " recruiting program
2. Pay volunteers a stipend to be on call at nights and weekends from home, and from the station on duty crew and clothing reimbursement for advanced training
3. Expand part time staff force
4. Use part time staff to fill in times to maintain initial staffing of at least 4, preferably five, on duty
5. If needed, utilize additional four full -time personnel to cover nights and utilize part time and volunteers for weekends and back up weekends. Continue to maintain a skeleton crew of volunteer support
6. If needed, hire sufficient full time firefighters to staff a single engine with at least four firefighters 24/7/365. A force of 20 would be required to staff just one engine.
7. Recall all full time and part time personnel for any working structure fire or immediately on dispatch if neighboring departments are also unable to muster four interior qualified firefighters.

Career Staff

:

Daytime staff consists of a Captain and four firefighters. There are a number of part time firefighters who fill in to maintain a staffing of five. Reportedly, no other firefighters respond during the daytime and during this study, I observed that to be the case. They are essentially on their own until mutual aid arrives. Mutual aid units, both career, volunteer or combination, often respond understaffed and are sometimes delayed while assembling crews.

Having an immediate response on at least an officer and three personnel, arriving quickly before a flashover occurs, provides a much safer environment for anyone exposed to the fire and for the firefighters.

The daytime shift arrives at 6:00 am , conducts a roll call and briefing then disperses to handle individual tasks on a fixed assignment system. Equipment checks, paperwork, servicing trucks, etc are initiated. One firefighter generally is assigned to the QRS and inspections. He uses an SUV for that purpose for most calls. One firefighter works on mapping and pre-incident plans, others work similar projects that they have become comfortable with.

Some days are relatively quiet, and others quite busy with emergencies and appointments. Some days, there is an opportunity for increased meaningful productivity. Taking on interruptible activities is desirable. Additionally, the QRS response seems overly casual and there needs to be a standard and consistent SOP on response protocol. There is little daytime training and no actual hands-on training. With experienced firefighters, complacency in training is natural but is unacceptable . Based on my observations, the following are my recommendations:

1. Develop, with a joint career-volunteer training committee, blended training sessions that are standardized and compatible with both career and volunteers. Post the schedule and invite everyone to day and night training.
2. The career staff recently developed an outstanding annual training plan that appears to be an excellent opportunity for both career and volunteers to practice together. However, it was developed by and for the career staff.
3. Develop a community outreach program to reach out to schools, churches, community groups etc to promote fire safety, CPR, AED, emergency preparedness, pool safety, pedestrian safety, recruitment, etc. Many of these programs should be joint programs with the police, park and rec, such as summer camps, national night out, etc. to promote community safety as a joint Township team.
4. Consider a child car seat check service in conjunction with the police, EMS CHOP and perhaps a local AMH pediatric group.
5. Consider a blood pressure check program that is open several times each month on a regular schedule in a location to be determined.
6. Assist the Training Committee with preparation and logistics for the weekly fire company training session.
7. Exercise development, for fire and emergency management.
8. Voluntary checks of smoke detectors in private homes, particularly after a fire occurs in a neighborhood. Saturate neighborhoods, knock on doors, provide literature etc. If needed, provide and install a smoke detector. Secure grant for detectors. Smoke detector programs are critical to life safety, especially in homes, and are not really addressed in any meaningful way.
9. Respond to "lift assist" calls in lieu of police and EMS
10. Training and drills are especially important on each day there is a part time firefighter working
11. Manage the emergency management software programs-examples attached to report
12. Make sure the EOC and all emergency management assets are ready for deployment at all times
13. Manage scheduling for duty crews
14. Be a mentor to new candidates for the fire company
15. Enforce street address requirements on buildings. Search out buildings and houses that are difficult to locate and work with the owner.
16. The firefighter who produces the pre-plans could also produce high quality mapping and plans for the UMPD as well as UMP&R
17. Attend and participate in the UMSD School Safety Committee.
18. Present safety programs to schools, churches, community groups
19. Any possible community outreach program where they can add value to public safety and still be available to respond to an emergency.

In general, the daytime crew is experienced, capable and well trained. They respond immediately and generally meet response time expectations and performance standards. Response (out the door) times need to be constantly reviewed to make sure that, for structure fires, the first out unit capable of fighting a fire is responding in 60 seconds or less, 90% of the

time. QRS Priority 1 calls should also be out the door in 60 seconds or less as well. They do not always meet this goal.

While there are opportunities for value added activities that will help enhance public safety, it's important to keep in mind that response time of the first unit on the scene with some ability to put water on the fire quickly is critical. That fact has to be recognized as first and foremost their mission. In those "stand by" times, there are opportunities to take on additional training and support activities, especially tasks that can help keep the volunteer component viable and reduce their workload. This needs to be ingrained into the culture of every firefighter who works for the Township. *However, their primary duty, to rapidly respond and resolve the emergency, with a crew of an officer and four firefighter/EMTs is mission critical and is secondary to everything else.*

Part time firefighters

Currently, there is a cadre of about 10 part time firefighters who fill in when needed to maintain minimal staffing of four plus an officer on the engine or quint and QRS. There are times when none are available and the crew must cover the entire township with three firefighters. I suggest adding at least 5-10 additional positions. I understand that many volunteer members do not know who these part time firefighters are. All should be required to attend at least one or two drills with the volunteers at night, and all should be introduced to the officers as a matter of routine. This lack of familiarity does not help build a seamless team approach.

This group of firefighters are experienced and capable. Some of them work full time at other fire departments. I recommend that a group alert system, through Active 911 be established and utilized as an emergency call back mechanism for those times when there is a major incident or simultaneous incidents and be used as a force multiplier. When there is a major storm occurring and/flash flooding, the department is usually overwhelmed with emergency calls for rescue or fires. With only one crew available during the daytime, these firefighters could be paged to respond to the station and staff the other units. With our mutual aid companies also short staffed, they may not be able to provide the help we need. This plan would be a backup system. Of course, they will need to be compensated. Additionally, to be of value, they need to be approved as drivers of all our apparatus. With summer approaching with anticipated very limited crews at night and weekends, they could also be called in if needed.

I did not observe the part time firefighters participate in any training or inspection activities during this study. This should be addressed as part of the daily work plan.

Training

The Training Officer position in fire departments is one of the more challenging ones. It is difficult to continually provide high quality, entertaining, and progressive training. A common thread among almost every survey response was a request for additional training. A high quality training program is essential to an effective response, firefighter and citizen safety as well as retention of personnel. The daytime training is minimal at best, and the day/night training is separate. These need to be blended into one training program that follows standardized

protocols. Training is documented in Emergency Reporting and attendance is posted but there are no performance measurements in place.

There are no training schedules posted for members to plan ahead and there are no training notices posted for any of the courses offered at Bucks or Montgomery County Fire Academy. The lack of posted training activities for all members to see is unusual. These should be posted and all members are encouraged to attend advanced or specialized courses.

There are currently many positive components to the training program and it has been exceptionally difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic to conduct training. The volunteer training captain does a commendable job and has made great efforts to provide quality training available virtually. There is a need for some training props but locating any space has been a challenge for the company. One idea identified by the company leadership is to secure space at the Vo-Tech School and share some inexpensive props with the school public protection program. This should be pursued. The career staff does assist the Vo-Tech school with some training and the Captain has served as Chairman of the advisory board. This is a positive relationship and with additional engagement, it could be a possible source of a training and recruitment partnership. There is also another possible location to utilize for some hands-on training.

The Sunoco Pipeline Terminal is vacant, and is located in an area that has many positives for training. Located at the end of a dead end street in a quiet commercial area, there is a large parking lot that could be used. Additionally, inside the fence line are a number of items that could be used for training if permitted. This would not be for burning but only for practicing several evolutions that require some type of prop. Sea box trailers are inexpensive (used about \$2200.) and can be stacked and reconfigured to teach and practice searching a simulated fire building. I suspect that Sunoco, with the right approach and the proper releases, would be willing to allow this.

Creative, standardized and regular training serves as a retention tool as well. Cheltenham Twp., Abington Twp and Upper Dublin Township all provide sizable training centers for their fire companies. Additionally Upper Dublin's new fire station includes interior fire and rescue props.

In order to help address the issues listed in the membership survey, the following are recommendations relative to training that should be considered:

1. A Training and Performance Standards Committee should be formed to plan and execute a systematic training program. The committee should consist of both career and interested volunteer members.
2. The career staff should provide support and logistics due to their availability to handle planning requirements during the business day.
3. At least one functional, hands-on standard evolution should be held each month, both during the day and the evening.
4. At least one pre-plan review and site visit should be scheduled each month in the evenings and one per week in the daytime.
5. Daytime shifts should conduct training daily, as a team.
6. All training should be open to all members, career and volunteer
7. The annual live burn is a best practice and should continue as a requirement for all interior firefighters.

8. A hands-on/functional training exercise should be conducted quarterly with mutual aid companies. It appears these companies are working together much more frequently but do not seem to train/drill together, especially on tactics.
9. There should be an increased emphasis on incident command and tactics through simulation and during functional exercises. There are less working fires than in the past, This is especially important in developing experience with young and inexperienced officers.
10. There should be immediate training and exercise programs on active shooter, scene accountability, mayday procedures and self-rescue. This is not currently done and is an immediate priority.

Code Enforcement

There is a Fire Code permit and inspection program in place. The fire code permits provide the mechanism for the career firefighters to inspect, on a regular basis, occupancies or processes that may pose a risk to the property, occupants or neighbors. Each year, about 300 permits are issued resulting in inspections. Additionally, the firefighters, to some degree, assist Code Enforcement with pre- occupancy reviews and post occupancy compliance of fire protection systems. This is the extent of their code enforcement function at this time.

A number of other combination departments, and/or fire marshals or code officials conduct inspections of rental units, living space in apartments, motels, enforce property maintenance codes, etc. Currently, the career firefighters inspect public areas of certain occupancies.

The fire protection features that have been mandated by Code are critical to not only the safety of the occupants, but everyone else in those buildings that are counting on them to be functioning.

There is an opportunity for the career firefighters to perform property maintenance inspections to assist the Code Enforcement Department. Property maintenance is often directly connected to fire and community safety.

The duties of the fire marshal, such as formal, written pre - construction plan review for access, water supply, and the like, seem to no longer be viewed as a routine and consistent duty of that position. That is an unusual arrangement and is a relatively recent change. There appears to be a disconnect between the Fire and Code departments. This may be related to the absence of a dept head counterpart to the Code Dept director. This disconnect should be addressed immediately by the Twp. Fire Chief/ Fire Marshal. It is highly desirable that the fire service, through the fire marshal, works hand in hand with code officials. This is an essential element of best practices in public safety. As soon as possible, the Fire Marshal and Code Director should consider a mutual agreement outlining who has what responsibility for code enforcement, plan review, inspections etc. This program is known as Community Risk Reduction. Ideally, there would be a single software program for keeping accurate records of all properties and code issues.

EMS

How fast a fire unit arrives at a fire or critical emergency, and what they do when they arrive determines the outcome for the victims. For a structure fire, arriving, and taking action to prevent the fire from reaching “ flashover”, the point where a room or area becomes fully involved and survival is highly unlikely is the goal of every well trained fire department. For a Sudden Cardiac Event, which kills hundreds of thousands of Americans every year, arriving, starting effective CPR and applying an automatic external defibrillator within 4-6 minutes is the initial step (after calling 9-1-1 Emergency Medical Dispatcher) in the chain of survival. The rapid arrival of advanced life support paramedics and a transport to an appropriate hospital is the goal.

SARS is the primary provider of EMS in the township. They also provide primary EMS to 6 other townships in Montgomery County. They staff one Advanced Life Support (paramedics) ambulance in the Twp., but increasingly, due to staffing (salary driven) issues, the service is sometimes reduced to Basic Life Support. This requires a distant SARS resource, with paramedics, to respond to the township, possibly exceeding acceptable response times. This is a concern and should be monitored by the Fire Chief. Timely ALS service is the standard of care for Upper Moreland residents.

There is also an increased demand for services, much of which is non billable. Lift assists, “ social issues” such as overdoses, mental illness, etc have become a frequent response issue. High demand occupancies, such as the new apartment buildings, nursing homes etc are having an impact, both financially and resource availability. SARS provided additional support services, such as decontaminating police cars during the initial covid pandemic, police and fire stand by events, etc, where they are unable to recover their costs. SARS indicates that it is struggling with increased costs and that it has frequently reported this to the Township at meetings. They have participated in table- top exercises with the township and occasionally attend planning meetings when invited, such as for the June Fete Fair. They are requesting “in kind” services from the township in order to help with the increasing costs of providing services. Examples include snow removal from the apron of the station, assistance with vehicle maintenance etc. They did indicate that the township provides workers comp insurance for them.

They support QRS responses to Priority 1 incidents and additional assistance for cardiac arrests. They work closely with the career staff on a day to day basis and would welcome QRS on night calls for Priority 1 and cardiac arrests calls. Currently, there is no QRS response from 6:00 pm until 6:00 am .

The firefighter assigned to QRS should monitor all EMS dispatches and deploy the QRS unit to any calls where out of town ambulances are responding into the township to provide care until the cover ambulance arrives.

SARS leadership should be included in the proposed Emergency Management Coordination Group meetings both on a routine basis as well as before pre planned events, severe storm planning etc.

The municipality selects their primary EMS response agency (priority 1 calls get the nearest ambulance and jurisdictional ambulance). In the future, if the Township decides to

expand the number of career firefighters, a more blended organizational model with SARS may be possible. Currently, SARS provides a high level of service to the Township and the UMFD is not sufficiently staffed to add primary ambulance duty to their menu of services. Again, with a full time or nearly full time department, ambulance service, in partnership with SARS or other EMS agency, or as a stand alone service, may be considered in order to increase productivity and control.

Call data for the past five years indicates a drop of all calls for QRS service from 2,652 in 2019 to 629 in 2020. Over the years, QRS responses have dropped off significantly. In 2019, there were 658 EMS or rescue responses by the QRS unit or 48% of all calls. Last year the number was 212 due to reduced dispatches during the initial covid crisis. However, in 2018 the total was 120, or 13% of all calls and in 2017, only 92 EMS and rescue calls were answered. In general, FD QRS calls were about 740-950, with the one year reaching 1366.

An updated policy on QRS response protocols will be needed to address this inconsistency.

The County Department of Public Safety, EMS division, is currently considering adjusting the QRS protocols to allow a more selective response SOP. The proposal, which requires a response for all Priority 1 calls (immediately life threatening) and a more selective response for lower acuity calls, is appropriate. All calls that may pose a hazard, such as vehicle accidents, chemical incidents and the like, should be answered by a full crew on a fire apparatus. Also, calls that will require extra help, such as cardiac arrest, trauma etc, should also be answered by a crew on a fire apparatus. Calls of a minor nature can be handled with the QRS SUV. The Quint and Squad should become certified as QRS units.

EMS calls in long term care facilities, physician offices, where medical staff is present, may not require a response, depending on the exact nature and the location of the responding ambulance.

Calls for lift assist should require an engine response to relieve or assist the police department.

I recommend the Township consider approving the proposed response plan change.

I also recommend that the shift Captain communicate daily with his/her counterpart at the SARS to coordinate how they can be collaborative during the shift. In other words, if the fire crew is going to be involved in a lengthy system test, or out of position, the SARS crew should be aware of that. The QRS assigned firefighter, as well as the shift captain, need to monitor EMS talk groups at all times for an immediate and coordinated response.

The following data source is MCDPS, Technology Division

Total EMS Calls:

- 2019 2,795
- 2020 2,79
- 2021 ytd 1014

Average EMS Dispatch Metrics (should be less than 9 minutes)

- 2019 Average Total Time from Call to EMS arrival is 7.4 minutes
- 2019 # incidents where EMS arrived in less than 9 minutes is 90.3%

2019 # incidents EMS arrived greater than 9 minutes is 9.7%

- 2020 Average time from call to arrival of EMS is 7.2 minutes
- 2020 # Incidents where EMS arrived in less than 9 minutes is 91.85%

2020 # incidents where EMS response time was greater than 9 minutes is 8.15%

- 2021 Average time from call answer to arrival is 7.6 minutes
- 2021 # incidents where response time is less than 9 minutes is 89.03 %
- 2021 # incidents where EMS response time is greater than 9 minutes is 10.97%

Upper Moreland Township, like elsewhere in this region, has had a significant opioid overdose crisis to deal with. Data indicates about 32 persons received Naloxone for overdoses in the past several years. An average of 1.7 doses were administered to each unresponsive victim, most often by the UMPD and SARS. 23 persons were saved, 7 did not survive and two are unknown. All police, EMS and QRS units, as well as many fire departments, carry Naloxone in case they arrive first, or the other agencies run out. UMFD QRS *does not carry Naloxone*. UMFD should participate in the county Naloxone program. The medication and training is free.

Emergency Management:

The Pa Emergency Management Code, Title 35, requires municipalities to maintain an emergency management plan, nominate an emergency management coordinator and have an area to manage a major emergency, known as an emergency operations center (EOC). An emergency operations plan outlines how a municipality will prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster. Upper Moreland has had a number of significant major events, including a mass shooting, major deadly floods, a tornado that damaged 155 houses and 8 commercial buildings, straight line wind storms that caused long term power outages, a number of serious hazmat incidents including pipeline / tank farm overfills, aircraft crashes, cyanide events, etc., major fires, including fires with multiple fatalities, high rise fires, blizzards and major storms. A number of significant police events have also been managed from the EOC or an on-scene command post (CP).

A hazard vulnerability analysis (HVA) of the Township identifies flash flooding, severe storms and transportation events as “ high probability” and counts flooding, storms, electric and water outages and biological events as “ high community impact”. The township is bisected by the Pa Turnpike and the Norfolk Southern Rail Line, both posing potential major event risks.

Historically, the Director of Emergency Services, and prior to that the Fire Marshal, supported by several senior police officers, handled the emergency management responsibilities. Several years ago, a police supervisor was assigned the responsibilities. The job shifted to a career firefighter and is currently handled by the Director of Code Enforcement.

I reviewed the Plan as well as current operations and note the following:

1. The Plan appears to be mostly up to date, is reviewed annually and meets the format and content template provided from the County. The contact information is currently being updated.
2. The program needs to be revitalized. There appears to be no participation or promotion of a number of initiatives that other municipalities promote and are active stakeholders such as:
 - Pulsepoint, a self registry for CPR trained neighbors, that alerts for cardiac arrests in public places near your location
 - Smart911, a self registry for families with special needs, such as autistic children, that alerts emergency responders and provides critical information
 - Text to 911, for when you can't call 911 by phone due to active threat or if you are hiding during a domestic incident , etc
 - STOP IT, confidential tie sensitive information, especially for students, to alert authorities about suicide or threats of violence
 - Everbridge, a community emergency alert notification available for townships to administer locally
 - WebEOC, a crisis software program used by all municipal emergency managers, schools, hospitals, etc and the County EOC
3. The EOC is used for a number of other purposes, particularly police patrol. It would be difficult and time consuming to activate the EOC in a rapid manner. There have been no EOC activation or operational drills.
4. Participation in the Eastern Montgomery County Emergency Management Group, the County Emergency Management monthly training and in the Emergency Disaster Incident Training Seminar (Edits) biennial symposium, a national training event conducted by the EMCCEMG and MDCPS has waned significantly. These are lost opportunities.
5. It has been several years since the last tabletop exercise (TTX) or any type of exercise.
6. It does not appear that the EMC or Fire Marshal participate in any safe school committees.

Emergency Management Recommendations:

1. The Twp. Fire Chief should also be the EMC, as listed in the Twp. Code as the duty of the Director of Emergency Services.
2. The EMC should chair an emergency management coordinating Group (EMCG), composed of the Fire Chief, Code Director, Public Works Director SARS Chief, and the

Police Chief. Other senior staff should attend as needed or as directed by the Manager. The primary purpose of the group would be to proactively plan for critical incidents, advise the Manager and Commissioners before, during and after major or complex events, and serve as a crisis response team for the Manager. The EMCG should meet quarterly to review the Plan, discuss “what if” scenarios, review roles etc. The group should meet prior to special events as well as predicted major storms to review the Incident Action Plan developed by the Fire Chief or Police Chief, depending on the nature of the event

3. The EMC, and the deputies EMCs, should participate to the extent possible, with their counterparts in the County as well as other municipalities and form professional relationships in order to foster and promote mutual aid.
4. The EMC should develop tabletop exercises, both scheduled and no notice several times a year.
5. The EMC should develop a program of citizen preparedness through public education, and community outreach, including various social media platforms.
6. The EMC should work with other departments to promote the various software programs listed in this Report.
7. The career firefighters should participate as staff to assist with the development of an active emergency management program.
8. The Code Director is an appropriate choice as the Deputy since a major part of emergency management is the mitigation phase as well as the recovery phase. The expertise of the Code Director, along with the Public Works director are critical to restoring normalcy and often overlooked.

Upper Moreland Township has taken very active steps to proactively address the issues of safety in the community. Few other municipalities have addressed flood mitigation strategies as aggressively as Upper Moreland. Until recently, Upper Moreland was the site of many very destructive floods. Firefighters literally have rescued hundreds of persons trapped in cars, some in great peril. A number of floods have resulted in Presidentially declared (Stafford Act) disasters, causing millions of dollars in damage. Flash floods still occur, and can be anticipated when conditions are right.

The aggressive code inspection programs have also reduced the quantity and inappropriate storage issues with hazardous chemicals. Sprinklers and automatic alarms now protect many large buildings. All of these have created a safer community but in emergency management, resting on past laurels, or being complacent, can result in bad outcomes.

Incentive Program

In order to establish a reliable and consistent staffing capability for the UMFD, as well as facilitate a rapid response to fires and other emergencies, a duty crew program should be established. This initiative will provide incentive pay for firefighters to sign up for duty crews from 6:00pm to 6:00am, to be relieved by the arrival of the career daytime force. Additionally, pay for

weekend duty crews should be established, with 12 hour shifts starting on Friday night and ending on Monday morning.

The goal is to provide a minimum of four qualified firefighters, including an officer in charge, driver, and at least two firefighters. Also, personnel can receive a nominal amount to be in either station on a stand-by basis for an immediate response. Chief officers receive a stipend and a vehicle and at least one should be on call after 6:00 pm for structure fires, rescues and other serious calls. Officers on rotating call duty should receive an additional stipend to be available.

For structure fires, all firefighters are expected to respond and staff all trucks. The duty crew is to handle all minor calls such as alarm activations, grass fires etc. They should also respond to cardiac arrests, auto accidents with injuries ,etc.

Finally, those completing approved advanced training should receive a financial award.

Financial incentive programs receive mixed reviews. They are working in many places and there are some places where it has not helped much. Despite the current incentive program offered at the WGVFC, members are leaving and few are joining. The Township will need to determine the funding available but the following is one possible option:

- \$ 10.00 per duty crew shift, available at home from 6p-12mn, OIC, \$15.00
- \$15.00er shift from 12mn - 6a, OIC \$20.00
- \$50.00 each 12 hour weekend shift
- \$4.00 per call or all responders, including duty crew, \$6.00 if responding from the station
- \$5.00 for participation in regular weekly drill
- \$100.00 for completion of FF1, FO 1
- \$200.00 for FF1, FO2, VRT
- NTE \$500.00 / year for Fire Science scholarship reimbursement at MCCC
- Funds are to reimburse firefighters for fuel, food, clothing, etc

I recommend that the Fire Co Board manage the entire funding program and the career staff assist with scheduling coverage. Crews should be 4, with 3 as a minimum.

A SOP will spell out specific duties and requirements for duty crews as well as tracking each individual participant.

Scheduling software, already in use by the career staff, can be utilized to fill open slots.

Risk Management

Operating at an out of control fire scene is dangerous. Firefighter injuries and deaths take an emotional and financial toll on any community, and management needs to place a priority on risk management, especially in terms of training, policy enforcement and employee development.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Firefighting Fatality Investigation of Firefighter Fatalities, after extensive after action reviews, lists a number of recommendations that should be considered by fire departments. The top recommendations follow:

1. Medical screening: Both career and volunteer firefighters receive annual medical screenings. This is an excellent benefit. Part time firefighters do not receive a medical screening. This should be required.
2. Fitness program: Some local departments provide fitness programs, fitness center memberships and/ fitness equipment. The Fire Co has a very minimal amount of fitness equipment on hand, crowded into a bunk room.
3. Effective training program, structured, comprehensive: See recommendations
4. Standard Operating Procedures, sometimes called Guidelines (SOP/SOG): Require Specific directions on common and unusual situations that need to be developed and updated. Distribution, training and accountability are needed
5. Use of the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System (ICS): This is paramount to safety. UMFD officers are trained in ICS
6. Strategy and tactics: need for everyone to be trained on risk vs gain, offensive, defensive transitional modes etc need to be part of simulation training programs.
7. Effective communications, information exchange and information sharing: See recommendations
8. Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE): UMFD does have quality PPE, fit testing and enforcement of PPE use
9. Proper staffing: see recommendations

An important element of a risk management program is the regular testing of critical equipment. The annual testing schedule, managed by the career staff, is as follows:

1. Rescue tool preventative maintenance, February
2. Fire apparatus pump maintenance, July
3. Fire apparatus pumps test, July
4. Generators serviced, July
5. Fire hose pressure tested, October
6. Ground ladders tested, October
7. Main ladder tested, August

All equipment is appropriately checked daily, weekly, monthly as scheduled.

Policy Development

It is generally recognized in Pennsylvania that protection from fire and other emergencies is a responsibility of the local government.

To assist in the fulfillment of that responsibility, the following are some of the policy recommendations that the Township may wish to develop and issue as part of a General Orders document:

The Township, through the Fire Chief, shall have full authority to develop policy, rules, regulations, procedures, and management protocols, including, among others:

1. Make final determinations relative to the deployment of emergency vehicles.
2. Reserve the right to house fire and emergency vehicles from other agencies on an emergent or routine basis, at their discretion.
3. Determine and establish, at their discretion, the scope and level of service to be provided.
4. The right to increase or decrease the quantity and/type of vehicles, equipment and vehicles assigned to any station or location
5. Conduct periodic inspections of all vehicles, equipment, stations, property, records and inventory to assess the care, maintenance, operational safety and capability, compliance with NFPA Standards and other requirements.
6. Staffing plans and assignments, including location of duty assignments
7. Apparatus deployment and personnel deployment
8. Scheduling of employees
9. Determining minimum staffing needs
10. Setting training requirements
11. Training standards and program management
12. Emergency scene tactics, command structure and operations
13. Set standard operating procedures and guidelines
14. Approving Incident Action Plans
15. Authorizing leave and schedule adjustments
16. Approving pre-incident plans
17. Equipment purchasing and placement approvals and specifications
18. Developing and approving a Standard of Cover
19. Approving uniform standards and regulations
20. Approving use of special teams and resources
21. Appointing, by merit, officers in the chain of command
22. Determining training equivalencies, based on experience and prior training

There are several Standard Operating Procedure Manuals that I reviewed. One dates to 1995. Others are more recent, with a number of issues under the WGVFC Board, the WGVFC Chief and the Township. There is one version that is well organized and forms a good platform for developing actual procedures that are for all fire personnel, career and volunteers to follow. I have been advised that everyone received a copy of this Manual, but I found only one copy in the station and I was advised that little or no training takes place on the material. There is a need for additional organization. Much of the material, especially Section 500, can be organized into a collection of overall policies and titled as General Orders. . Another section, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) , sometimes called Guidelines (SOG), should be developed to

instruct how to perform duties in a consistent and standardized manner. A much smaller section should be titled Special Orders, sometimes known as Chiefs Orders are used for guidelines, procedures or notification that may be temporary, self-expiring or eventually deleted or codified into the SOPs.

The SOP/ SOG Manuals that I reviewed are well done and need to be developed for many additional areas of concern, particularly on low frequency- high consequence or high impact incidents that may pose a serious challenge to the township. Examples would include procedures on active shooters or a bio- hazard, building collapse, line of duty death, etc. Additionally, a detailed disciplinary policy should be included.

Facilities

The UMFD is served by two stations, each at the north and south borders of the Township. Neither are ideally situated. While it would seem that having two stations might help for a more rapid response, the station locations are more of an advantage to the townships that they border than to Upper Moreland.

The north end station, known as 10B, is barely viable. There are 4-6 active firefighters assigned to that station, all but one are line officers, including the volunteer chief, captain and lieutenant. The station does not get out during the day, but does respond at nights and weekends, often with an understaffed crew and is often delayed. It does scratch as well. It is seriously understaffed but does have a dedicated crew. The members do stay overnight for predicted severe storms etc but there is no bunk room. An addition with improved creature comforts, such as a bunk room and showers should be considered as part of a capital improvement plan.

The headquarters, or main, fire station, known as 10A, has a number of deficiencies as well, such as:

1. The public entrance is difficult to locate. Also, there is no sign advising the public how to access the building. There is no doorbell near the offices or that can be heard in the building
2. The building is not ADA compliant, limiting community access for programs, outreach, etc.
3. The bunk room has 6 bunks jammed into a small room that is shared with some minimal fitness equipment. There are no gender specific lockers, bunks or showers
4. Operational security is minimal. There is a CCTV system that, if monitored from the office area, would enhance situational awareness in areas not visible to the on duty staff
5. There is no emergency phone on the exterior of the building. This is highly unusual as fire stations are often a source of refuge for those needing help.
6. The building sign, though dated, was removed for construction and not replaced. A modern LED sign can be purchased as part of a SAFER grant if used for recruiting.
7. There is a need for a renovation that may include a new, modern multi-agency Emergency Operations Center, a modern training room with modern monitors and AV

equipment, real bunk rooms, and a cosmetic facelift. An improved fitness room would help with retention.

8. Parking is severely limited and needs to be factored into any renovations.

If an opportunity exists, consideration for a centrally located fire /public safety headquarters should be explored. Responding from a staffed station located near Terwood and York would eliminate the need to maintain two stations. Traveling to emergencies in under 4 minutes, 90% of the time, should be feasible. Better bunk rooms and apartments should allow for a quick response by responding duty crews. A training space, modern EOC, work stations etc. could be shared by all public safety agencies in the Township. A station in this area would be ideal for a future regional solution to the volunteer staffing crisis, especially in a potential partnership with adjacent municipalities.

The department maintains an outstanding fleet of state of the art apparatus.

Performance Standards

The National Fire Protection Association, a consensus standards making body, publishes hundreds of standards, recommendations and codes. While many of the published standards are relevant, the one standard, NFPA 1710, applies specifically to Volunteer and Combinations fire departments. Many of the recommendations made in this study are based, at least in part, on many of the sections of NFPA 1710, as well as other relevant sections on the NFPA Standards. Below are just several of the most important recommendations that are considered to be industry standards:

1. 4.1.1 The authority having jurisdiction (AHJ),, shall issue standard operating procedures (SOP). The Township is the AHJ.
2. The AHJ shall determine a succession of command authority
3. 4.2.2 The AHJ shall determine the number and type of units based on risk analysis and pre-fire plans
4. 4.3.3 The Fire Dept. identifies the minimum staffing required
5. 4.7.2 For the minimum hazard, a single family dwelling, the recommended staffing is 15 firefighters arriving in nine minutes, 90% of the time
6. 4.4.2 There should be an annual evaluation of the level of service, deployment, and response time objectives
7. 4.6.1 Four firefighters should be assembled to commence operations in hazardous areas, working in terms of two

When stations are staffed (day shift), the following are goals that should be monitored and evaluated. The volunteer force can also use these as performance goals:

1. Turnout time from the station should be less than 80 seconds. I recommend a 60 second goal instead.
2. He turnout time for an EMS response should be 60 seconds or less
3. Travel time should be less than 240 seconds
4. The second unit should arrive (staffed with four) in less than 360 seconds
5. The balance of the first alarm should arrive in 480 seconds

6. A cardiac call should get an AED on scene in 240 seconds or less
 7. An Advanced Life Support Unit (paramedic) should be on scene in less than 480 seconds
 8. 4.3.4 The initial fire attack should be underway in less than 120 seconds after arrival
- How soon the units arrive, and what they do once they arrive, can be practiced and drilled, for time, safety and effectiveness. These are critical areas that the Fire Chief must monitor and take corrective actions when necessary.

Township Engagement

Feedback from the membership survey indicates that it would be valuable for the Township administration and elected officials to be more engaged with the department. An annual event, such as a breakfast or lunch that would include updates from the administration on Township policy, particularly training updates on harassment and discrimination, budget process etc would be valuable. The annual event could include a recognized speaker for training and motivation, recognition awards from the Commissioners, and distribution of bonus incentive items. An organized display of equipment and training would be beneficial.

Fire Chief

I reviewed the 2014 job posting for the Director of Emergency Services/Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Coordinator. I have the following suggestions:

1. Change the title to Chief of Fire and Emergency Services or Fire Chief, Upper Moreland Township Fire Department
2. Add a statement indicating that experience with a combination department is preferred.
3. Add a statement that the Fire Chief will be a working chief, and will be expected to take command of working fires and other serious emergencies
4. Add that the Chief will be required to develop professional relationships with residents, stakeholders, peers, subordinates and other municipal officials
5. Change "natural" to National in last paragraph of employment opportunities notice
6. Add to Preferred Requirements that a candidate has earned a PEMA Professional Emergency Management Certification
7. Some preferred certifications include CEM, CFO, CFPS

Conclusion

The programmatic success of increasing staffing, enhancing daytime productivity, providing an effective training and exercise program, increasing communications and working to unify this department requires a full time Fire Chief. This individual should be sensitive to the need to maintain a strong volunteer component and have the temperament to effectively lead a

combination type department. This is the most urgent need and all other recommendations in this report are based on that conclusion.

The question of whether the WGVFC, as an organization, is to remain the agency that serves as the community's First Responder to all emergencies is really in their hands. If they, with support and recognition efforts by the Township, unify in a team effort, there is no reason that they can not fill this essential role well into the future.

There is a need for change, and with change, there is hope that the volunteer system can continue to serve the Township. But the change comes at a cost, but much more reasonable cost than even a minimally staffed full time, or mostly full time department.

Attachments

1. Helpful resources
2. Benchmarking Information
3. Survey results
4. ConsultantInfo
5. Acknowledgements
6. Raw Data from MCDPS under separate cover

Helpful Resources

1. SAFER Grant:

A Staffing for Adequate and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (NFPA) can be utilized for recruiting and retaining, as well as adding staffing to local “front line” firefighters. The purpose is to enhance a fire department's

abilities to comply with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) staffing, response and operational standards. Some recent grants to this area include:

- Warminster \$1.7 m
- Elkins Park \$315k
- Lower Providence \$452k
- North Penn \$90k
- Radner \$492k
- East Norriton \$303k
- Jenkintown \$176k
- Harmonville \$380k
- Barren Hill \$420k
- Upper Merion \$1m
- Horsham \$468k

See firegrants@fema.dhs.gov

2. LEXIPOL

This service provides manuals, policies, training bulletins, etc. This is utilized by many police departments and they also offer programs for the fire service as well.

See Lexipol.com

3. Center for Public Safety Excellence, Commission on Fire Accreditation.

This agency accreditation can help with quality improvements, standardized policies and procedures, documentation, liability avoidance, etc.

See: www.cpse.org

4. Power DMS

This is a program that tracks all critical documents, policies, procedures, discipline etc. Single repository for critical documents.

See: www.powerdms.com

Benchmarking

1. Lower Moreland Twp. The township funds daytime staffing of a driver, officer and two firefighters from 6:00am to 6:00pm daily. There are several township employees that also respond routinely from their township jobs during the days. The duty crews respond

to cardiac arrests to assist the ambulance, which is provided by Bryn Athyn Borough. Night times responses are adequate to not require paid staffing at this time.

2. Cheltenham Twp. The fire companies are heavily engaged in recruiting. One company was recently shut down by the township for a lack of response, among other things. The four remaining companies are very involved in recruiting as well as retention efforts. They strive for a culture of inclusion, respect and tradition. Glenside Fire Co provides incentives and is flexible in helping members to achieve training regiments. LaMott Fire Co has recently added a "live in" program to help with night time staffing. A recent study commissioned by the Township recommended adding a full time fire administrator position to work with the full time fire marshal and several part time instructors.
3. Horsham Fire Co provides fire protection and EMS services for the township and is a primary mutual aid resource for Upper Moreland. They have two modern fire and EMS stations that are staffed 24/7 with full time firefighters and firefighter paramedics providing an immediate response as well as Advanced Life Support ambulance service. Daytime staffing is seven Personnel, including 5 at the headquarters station and two at the substation. Full time crews are supplemented by volunteers who are paid to be on an assigned duty crew to respond as a guaranteed rapid response team, backed up by volunteers for more serious incidents. The stand by crews, operating from home, receive a nominal fee for being on call and members also receive a fee for attending training and drills. They have training and advancement requirements but they are not overly stringent. Paid and volunteer crews train and function seamlessly, as a team. Some initial certifications are required, then attendance at 15 drills per year. Night time and sub station volunteer response can be sporadic, but the crews on standby have helped. They receive their checks at a holiday party provided for the firefighters and their families. There is a volunteer chief and deputy chief, as well as a full time assistant chief. Plans call for a full time chief as well as additional stipends in the future.
4. Newtown recently had an independent study to review the delivery of emergency services and provide advice to the Township. Their operation is similar to Upper Moreland. They have a daytime crew of five, plus a fire marshal, that are all full time Township employees. These firefighters are highly utilized by the Township and conduct inspections, plan review, and other services as requested.. Evening nights and weekends, coverage is provided by the volunteer fire company. The Township oversees the budget, procurements, etc. but there are separate policies and procedures in place, and the chain of command is not consistent or unified. The daytime crew works 6a -6p. There is a volunteer duty crew that handles minor calls from 10p-6a. There is a \$40,000 incentive budget. Their study concludes that there should be a township fire chief and they have already taken steps to implement this recommendation. The new chief was recently hired and has accountability for financial, administrative and operational issues. Their consultant has also proposed an interesting suggestion for a volunteer recruiting incentive program that pays a nominal amount to members who bring members into the organization.
5. Upper Merion has a full time fire chief and two full time fire marshals. They have six career firefighters working 6:00am to 6:00pm, 48 hour work week. They staff an engine with four and an ambulance and also respond as a QRS unit. They respond to low acuity

EMS calls in a car and an engine for priority type events. They secured a SAFER grant from FEMA to pay volunteers to be in station from 6:00pm to 6:00 am \$100.00, plus \$50.00 for meals per shift, and increase that to \$200.00 on weekends, as well as pay \$100. for meals. Each of the three volunteer chiefs rotate on call and receive \$7500.00 as deputy chiefs of the township fire department. Safety chiefs also rotate and receive the same stipend. All have administrative duties such as scheduling during their on call week. Volunteer members of their three fire companies, in teams of four, receive \$40.00 a night to respond from home. Preferred staffing is four, minimum to respond is three. The volunteers manage the stipend program themselves, including scheduling, pay etc. they are working to defer the time when they will need to hire career staff for nights and weekends. They have a steering committee to help manage the changes, recognizing that change equals longevity for the volunteer service. The career staff inspect rental properties when they become vacant and also apartments, hotels and motels annually. the fee is \$85.00. career staff work on prep land, inspections, code enforcement, etc and utilize minimal office time.

6. Hatboro is experiencing a similar situation with limited manpower during both the day and night. response is not reliable at times and they have scratched some calls and have responded with insufficient personnel. They have a small, limited reward system but no assigned crews. They do not employ career staff.
7. The Warminster Fire Dept has a similar situation with very limited staffing at times. They are in the process of hiring 5 employees to act as firefighters/ inspectors to supplement the daytime staffing, which is currently extremely short. They do have duty crews who respond from home for minor calls at their various fire stations and this is working well. They do provide a stipend for the standby duty.
8. The Centre Square Fire Company protects Whitpain Twp from one new and large station. At one time, they had had a substation but it closed after several years of failing to attract any firefighters. They employ full time firefighters to cover daytime calls, including QRS. They do have a stipend program to try to improve night time responses.
9. East Norriton Twp. staff 4 positions, a director of fire and emergency services/ fire marshal / EMC and 3 firefighters, all of whom work out of the substation during the day. There is a fire department nearing completion that may recommend additional career staff. Like Upper Dublin, they perform housing inspections on rentals, U&O inspections, fire related code enforcement, and assist with emergency management. They have three volunteers on call at night that receive \$60. A night. They do not have to be in the station but must respond. .
10. The Northampton fire department staff 40 volunteers, two 5 person platoons and one full time deputy chief. They staff an engine company with 4 and one is assigned, on a rotating basis, as an inspector. Volunteer chief is in command. Career staff covers daytime from 0600 and volunteer duty crews with four firefighters (three stations) cover evenings and nights from home. They receive an expense recovery of \$30. pershift. This covers reasonable expenses such as gas, meals, clothing etc. They respond to high priority EMS calls on a 4 person engine company. They are building two new stations with a budget of about 24 million. The HQ station will have individual sleeping/showers, ready for future career staffing at night. They emphasize that functioning as one

organization, with one command structure is essential and that benefits should be similar to police.

11. Upper Dublin Twp. employees a full time fire marshal/ fire services administrator as well as a Fire Inspector. These two, when available, respond as members of the fire company during the daytime. They work out of the main fire station, one of two, along with part time clerical assistance. They manage all fire code inspections, as well as residential and commercial inspections. They have a rental inspection program that is viewed as highly successful in preventing the apartments, hotels etc from degrading their fire protection. Additionally, a uniformed presence has a deterrence effect with landlords and at the same time, firefighters gain valuable information and familiarity with all of the high impact occupancies in the township. A letter proceeds the inspection visit with expectation clearly spelled out. There is a \$50. fee. There are over 1500 properties in the system. Apartments are inspected every two years. They are tied into the code dept software program. They check Township properties for visible addresses, update "caution notes" posted in the computer aided dispatch (CAD)system at the County, review dispatch notes from the County CAD system, checking for current information such as Knox Box location, medical issues, etc. This is of value to not only fire, but police and EMS. Inspections are prioritized based on the use group and the 400 code inspections are done every other year for less hazardous occupancies. All of these inspections are scheduled by the part time clerical assistant. They have an active follow up to automatic fire alarm system malfunctions, which is a major problem for the fire service. Every residential alarm is followed up by a call to try to help the homeowner prevent false alarms and commercial alarms and get an immediate visit from the fire marshal. This is a successful program. The township's fire company, Ft. Washington Fire Co., is all volunteer. They have an online application process and a candidate may attend 5 drills before they are voted on. They have no fundraising obligations, a very active training program, a new and modern fire station that helps attract applicants. They secured a grant for new, bright modern LED signs in front of their two stations that advertise for memberships. There is office space and computers for members to use and some members spend time during the day working from the fire station. They have 4 bunk rooms for a live-in program.

Survey Results

1. What should we STOP doing?

- Criticism
- Infighting
- Not working as a team
- Lack of communications
- Attacking each other
- Making training harder than it needs to be
- Creating benefit programs that are unattainable for most
- Standard too high, inhibiting adding volunteers
- Division between paid and volunteer
- Vol admin members stop treating vol members like paid staff
- Admin Board making operational decisions
- Scrutiny by paid staff
- Lack of oversight of paid staff
- Micromanagement
- Admin board going to paid staff for everything
- Cliques
- Being a bully
- Attitude
- Divisive atmosphere
- Pushing away members that pose a threat to others who
- Dictatorship
- Being two separate companies
- Everything
- Someone is needed that understands both sides and reacts fairly
- Alienate members
- Stop war between two stations
- Destroying self esteem of weaker members

2. What should we START doing?

- Productive meetings between career and volunteer
- Work as a team
- Communicate
- Common goals reward members with money
- Show appreciation to our members
- Recruit
- Benefits to retain members
- Bridge gap between career and volunteers
- Appreciate volunteers more
- Coming out for calls-less selectively
- Fix career, vol relationship
- Respecting each other
- Stop character assassination
- Provide mission cards to all

- Better retention program
- Find out why we don't have better night time response
- Unifying rules and regulations for all members, career and volunteers
- Support members who give their all and stop supporting those that bring nothing but hate and turmoil
- Find out why members have left
- Appreciate the volunteer
- Encourage each other
- Leadership should work with weaker members
- Greet new members with open arms
- Have special events that involve families
- Stop bullying each other
- Invite back lost members

3. What should we KEEP doing?

- Training
- Make sure members feel appreciated
- Maintain our skills
- Recruit new members instead of pushing older members out
- Increase training and increase back to basics
- Maintain an active volunteer status
- Incentives for members
- Welcoming members
- Meeting high standards for training
- Keep advancing our skills
- Build our team up
- Provide best emergency services
- Don't know, nothing worked for positive under current arrangement with township
- Train, train, train
- Train twice a week
- Public service
- Fighting to remain in existence
- Training at the MCFA and BCFA

4. Do we have the resources we need to meet our mission? 16 yes, 4no

5. I feel welcome here 9yes, 8 no, 6yn

6. I feel valued here 10 yes, 7 no, 3 y&n

7. My voice counts 9 es, 5 no, 4 yen

8. I have opportunities to be engaged 12 yes, 5 no, 3 y&n

9. I am well trained to meet our mission 19 yes, 1 no

10. What is the one thing you are most proud of as a member here?

- Being a greater firefighter
- Helping community
- Pride in the job we do
- Reputation with mutual aid
- My years of service
- Community involvement
- Making 50 years
- Relationships
- Serving township
- Professionalism of paid staff
- Still around despite toxic atmosphere
- Being raised here
- Respect i get from non fire friends
- Most members put out 100% effort at scenes
- Memories of fun times

11. What do you like best about being a member here?

- Like members, both career and volunteer
- Nothing, members are discouraged
- The job, helping others
- Nothing
- The people
- The atmosphere
- Trying to make things better
- Quality of training
- Best part of being here is long past
- I feel values and appreciated and my opinion matters
- Carry on tradition of WGVFC

12. What is the biggest challenge we face as a company?

- Recruit new members
- Some attitudes destroying good members (hostility)
- Treat members as you wish to be treated
- Getting members to respond
- Leadership
- Working together
- Working together as a department-paid and volunteer

- Getting board and non board on same page
- Trust and equal respect
- Meeting service expectations
- Getting respect from Twp staff
- Cliques
- Declining interest in volunteering
-

13. What is the most important thing we should be doing here in 2020-2021?

- Retention of current members x3
- Stop chasing people away
- Lack of respect
- Stop bullying
- Stop driving mem,beers away
- Correct the paid/vol relationship
- Teamwork
- Develop discipline and respect
- Grow our membership
- Lack of respect
- Stop judging others
- Breaking down walls between stations, paid. Volunteers
- Fixing the double standard and backstabbing
- Mesh as a company
- Be the best we can be
- Restore sense of worth
- Fire company to have an active part in decision making
- Recruit and retainx3

14. What are our biggest challenges?

- Personality differences between members
- Lack of teamwork
- Retention
- Communications
- The divided between paid and volunteer
- Leadershipx2
- Staffing
- Attitude of members
- Training
- Communicate
- Become a cohesive group
- Find out why we have such a problem at night
- Work together equally, not a dictatorship

- Listen more-a huge issue
- Non-running members disagreeing with the active crew
- Building relationships
- Paid vs volunteer and fire co board
- Dealing with bs
- Proper staffing to accomplish our goals
- Membership growth and retention
- Night xxx
- Communicating between a day and night

15. What can we do better?

- Accept new ideas to move forward
- Communicate more effectively
- Care about each other
- Increase transparency from township
- Treating everyone the same
- Act like leaders, not tyrants
- Get preceptors that are qualified to teach
- Develop strong leadership and discipline
- Engage volunteers so they feel like part of the whole department
- Trust the members that do, not the ones that contro;l and manicure others

16.what is the #1 priority for this company?

- Provide emergency services x5
- Public safety x2
- Trainingx2
- Retention
- Maintain what we are doing but I'm sure this assessment will also be one sided
- Protect community
- Responding x3
- Getting members
- Communicate-leaders to members, members to leaders

17.where do you see this dept. in five years?

- If recruiting and retention are successful, volunteers will remain as productive entity
- Same as today x 2
- Hope its a better place
- Paid chief and paid deputy
- Being 100% paid
- Closed or divided
- Paid 24/7 x 4

- Paid chief, additional paid
- Increased membership, hopefully
- No clue
- Hopefully still active
- Thriving dept with no I quit mentality serving township as we have through history
- Able to get out 3 properly staffed trucks for all calls

18. Comments/suggestions/concerns:

- Make being here fun again
- Split chief vehicle responses, one to station, one to scene
- Commissioners need to be more involved, Fire Board again
- Increase communications with township
- Hire a director that supports both sides, not lack of respect or trust
- What is the mission of the WGVFC?
- Fire co is amazing, some minor issues that can be fixed

Consultant Information

Thomas M. Sullivan, recently retired from the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety, where he served as the director for nearly 20 years. During his tenure, he oversaw the growth of the department to about 300 employees serving in eight divisions including

Emergency Communications, Public Affairs, Law Enforcement Training and Liaison, Fire Academy Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Management, Administration, and Technical Services.. Sub-sections included Homeland Security, Intelligence, EMS Institute, Hazmat, Community Resilience, Community Outreach, GIS, Logistics, Urban Search and Rescue, municipal planning, voice and data technology, network technology, Communications Center operations, accreditation, school safety, police training, fire, rescue and hazmat training, performance standards and professional development.

Mr. Sullivan provided leadership for numerous capital projects including major construction of the EOC, Communications Center, Training Campus as well as upgrades of all technology. Capital expenses exceeded 125 million dollars. Additionally, he served as chairman of the Southeastern Pa Regional Terrorism Task Force as well as the Philadelphia Urban Area Security Initiative Working Group, overseeing between 20-30 million dollars annually in homeland security strategy and grants.

He was named by the US Secret Service to the Executive Committee for the Papal visit to the Philadelphia region, commanded the county EOC for the first year of the Covid-19 crisis, served on the Commissioners crisis management team and oversaw the county's response to dozens of major incidents, including numerous Stafford Act disasters. He has a Master of Science degree from Saint Josephs as well as a Bachelor of Science from West Chester University. He has completed the select Executive Leaders Program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. as well as the Executive Fire Officer Program at the FEMA National Emergency Training Center. He has published numerous articles in professional journals and has been an adjunct instructor and advisory board member for several colleges.

His professional certifications include Certified Fire Protection Specialist, Certified Emergency Manager, Certified Fire Investigator, and others. He has published numerous articles in professional journals.

He has served as a firefighter, arson investigator, fire officer, emergency manager, fire marshal, fire chief and emergency services director for a number of agencies.

A partial list of prior consulting contracts include:

- The Federal Land Reuse Authority, Naval Development Center, Warminster, Pa
- Springfield Township
- Upper Dublin Township
- Horst Construction
- Frank Bartle, Esq
- LA Fitness
- Whitpain Township
- Fort Washington Expo Center
- Elm Terrace Gardens, Lansdale, Pa

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