City of Stoughton

Additional Staffing Request Form

General Information

Date:	08/17/2023
Director:	Joshua Ripp
City Department:	Fire Department
Requested Position Title:	Fire Dept FT Staff (position responsibilities TBD)
Status:	☒ 40 Hours ☐ 30 Hours ☐ 24 Hours ☐ 22.5 Hours ☐ Other _____

Directions:

Before adding a new position to our budget, we need to justify the significant additional expense. Increasing headcount is an important and expensive decision that can only be funded with anticipated increased productivity, expense reduction, and/or additional revenues.

The Employee Cost Summary will be completed by the Director of Human Resources & Risk Management once this form is received.

Justification

Give a specific explanation regarding why the proposed position is critical to the operation of your department: Attach proposed or existing position description and organizational chart.

The Stoughton Fire Department is requesting a Full Time Position for coverage during the week, daytime hours. In house times would be similar to the schedule of the current Fire Tech position. This person would be primarily responsible for responding on calls during the day. Other tasks/responsibilities would be assigned, based on qualifications, and re-assigning duties from other employees of the Stoughton Fire Department. One major component of this person's position, would be the additional time would allow Stoughton Fire Department to take over cleaning of our building (assigned amongst current staff). The position would also be tasked with assisting in vehicle checks, fire prevention, fire investigation, and would need to be willing to learn EMS (if not already licensed).

This position description would adjust as we re-assessed assignments amongst current staff. There are many jobs handled that could be re-allocated, especially if current staff takes over cleaning in the fire station.

Impact

If position is not approved, give specific departmental impact as well as impact to City services and other departments:

The position not being approved puts the City of Stoughton in a position of continuing to tax the volunteer FF's of the SFD that respond in from work. They are currently come in for all calls, and in an effort to get them back, the in house/FT staff will get on scene, and cancel the crews. The best solution would be to not have them leave work in the first place .

Included with this document is the other alternatives we are looking at (in addition to or in place of). We are on the cusp of having issues with daytime staffing with a few retirements, and if supervisors at businesses decide they don't want to allow people to leave, we could really be hurting.

Alternatives

List alternatives to filling this position: Give specific alternatives, i.e., restructure – attach additional documents, if necessary.
The alternatives are that we will need to look at what services we provide, and make decisions on what items we realistically aren't able to handle anymore.

Submitted By

Director:		
Joshua Ripp, Fire Chief		
Signature:	**Joshua Ripp**	**Date: 8/17/2023**

CITY OF STOUGHTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

JOSHUA RIPP - *Fire Chief*
401 East Main Street, Stoughton, WI 53589

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Personnel Proposal for 2024

Joshua Ripp, Fire Chief

Request: I'm requesting 3 separate items for 2024, relating to staffing for the Stoughton Fire Department:

1) Duty Crew Pay: Duty Crew members pay to be raised to $50 per 12 hour shift for FF's, $60 per shift for Operators, and $70 per shift for Vehicle Officers and OIC (Command Officer) shifts.

2) Fill In Staff for FT Staff: This would create a mechanism that allows us to hire back staff to fill in when Fire Tech Gander, DC Miller or myself are off for vacations, trainings, meetings, etc. This would include stipends for the shift for current SFD members, and an hourly wage to hire back those from outside the department.

3) Addition of 4th FT person for Daytimes: This would add a 4th full time person at Stoughton Fire Department, to be scheduled during the day, intended to cover Monday through Friday.

Background:

Stoughton Fire department has historically been a combination department, with 3 full time staff typically on for a number of decades. Originally, these were "Driver" positions. These staff were responsible for operating the fire apparatus, performing inspections, handling maintenance and just being on rotating 24 hour shifts at the station.

The average member is a stipend employee, receiving an annual stipend (paid in November of each year). There is an ability to also sign up for "Duty Crew" which includes a stipend per 12 hour shift. This is paid monthly (per Fair Labor Standards Act rules, and IRS rules on volunteers).

This was adjusted to the current configuration around 2009/2010, where the FT Positions were transitioned to a career Chief, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal, and Fire Tech. The Fire Tech/FF position has been in flux since 2011, and most recently been upped to full time, from ¾ time, which it had been since 2011 or so.

In the meantime, we have jumped in calls to service. 2012 had 317 Calls to service, and we ran 410 calls in 2022. This will continue to climb as the city grows. Our call volume is also increasing as we assist our neighbor departments on calls (and they return the favor by assisting us). We all are running with fewer

and fewer staff, especially daytime during the week. This increase in call volume is mostly calls that can be handled by 4-5 staff. However, due to the uncertainty of who will show up when the call comes in, we have to page out the entire department. This puts stress on the SFD members who respond in from work, as they generally have to clock out or make up time that is spent responding to calls.

My ultimate goal would be to staff the SFD in the following manner:

DUTY CREW:

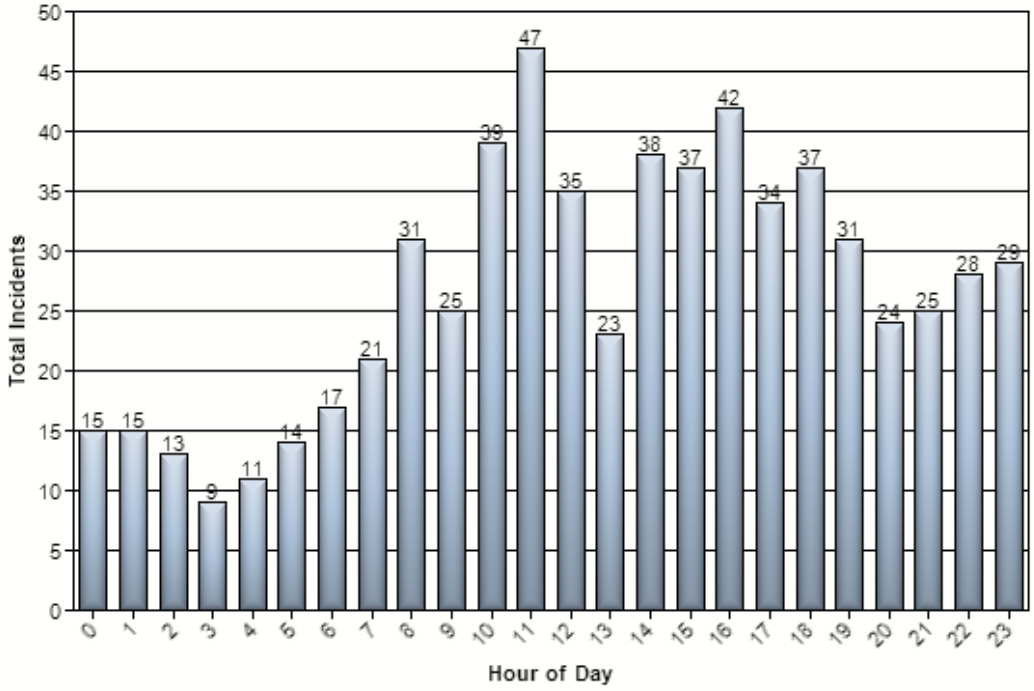
Mon – Friday Daytime: 4 Full time/Part time staff do be the Daytime duty crew. This would include the Chief, Deputy Chief, Fire Tech (current) and one more position that would be dedicated to the station. One would be assigned to the Command Car, the rest to respond on a "Big Red Truck" as appropriate for the call.

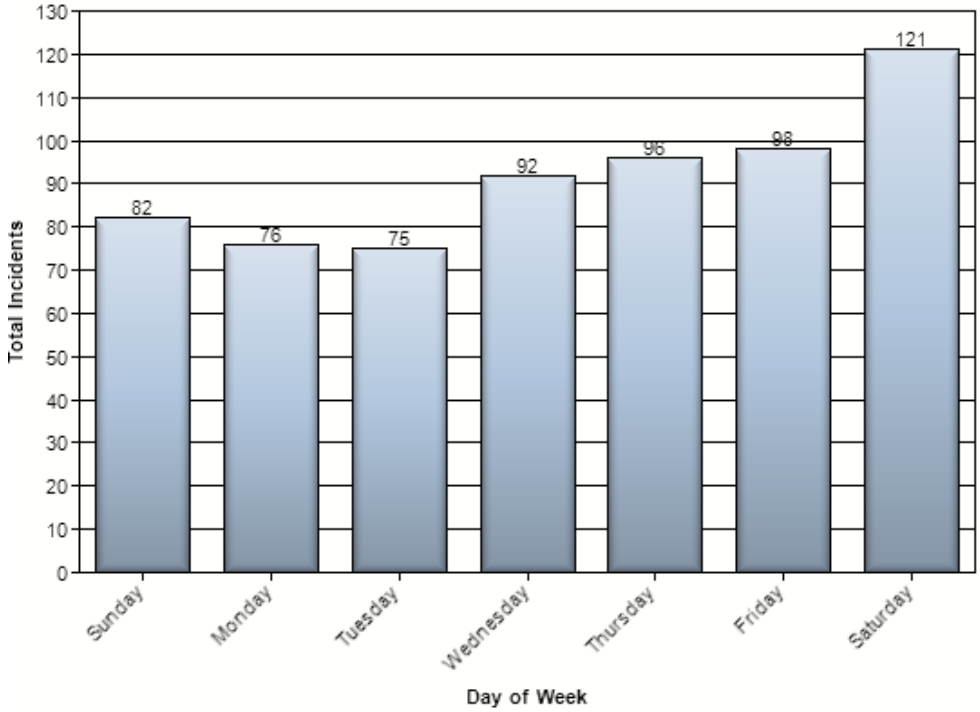
Weekends and Week nights: Duty Crew that would include an OIC (vehicle taken home) and 4 people dedicated to responding on the designated duty crew calls. These would be the current SFD staff filling positions. We don't have sleeping facilities at this point.

ALL CALL: This would remain as it is today. Calls anticipated to require more than 4 staff to handle would move to paging out the entire department, and responding as appropriate.

The next page shows the breakdown of calls from January 1, 2022 to August 1, 2023.

Hourly Breakdown of Incidents





Request #1 – Duty Crew staffing and Pay

This handling Duty crew was developed under Retired Chief Lamers, with the goal of setting up a basic crew to handle calls that only require a few personnel. The theory is that with this plan, everyone else can refrain from responding to the station and sitting/waiting, wasting time that could be spent sleeping, working, or other activity in their regular life.

The pay for this has stayed at $15/person for FF's, $20/person for operators and officers positions, for a 12 hour shift (Runs 6 am to 6 pm, and 6 pm to 6 am). The same 5-6 people generally sign up for Duty Crew time. One reason expressed is money. Many members have expressed that it's not worth it to them dedicate 12 hours of being close to the FD to run calls, for $15 or $20 for a 12 hour shift.

My proposal would be to up the duty crew pay to $50 per 12 hour shift for FF's, $60 per 12 hour shift for Operators, and $70 per 12 hour shift for Vehicle Officers and OIC's. This would help to ease up on the amount of time the entire department is dispatched for a call, which could be handled by a crew of 4-5. In addition, adding a spot for an OIC (Officer In Charge) spot for command staff during that time). They would take a command car home.

This would put a scheduled person in the Command Car and on the "Duty Crew" to handle the specified calls. At any point, if there is information that indicates more staff are necessary, the rest of the department can be dispatched. The chart below is my initial estimate, but it

	Per Shift	# per Wk
OIC	$ 70.00	9
Driver	$ 60.00	14
Veh Officer	$ 70.00	14
FF	$ 50.00	28
Trainee	$ 25.00	1

Currently, I have a consistent 5-6 members that run on duty crew today, but they do so because they are close by (generally). The remaining members aren't willing to generally run because the current amount per 12 hour shift isn't worth dedicating time out of their normal lives. The Duty Crew members have to be close enough to get a truck on the road in a reasonable amount of time (less than 8 minutes). Beyond that, and (by dispatch protocol) mutual aid units are sent automatically. We also need to be spreading the workload across more of the department than just 5 members. We will burn them out, I have no doubt.

Request #2 – Adding Fill In staffing resources

Our current weekday, daytime staffing routinely consists of the following:

(3) - FT Staff (Chief, Deputy Chief and Fire Tech) All capable of interior firefighting

(2) - Retired Volunteers (retired from their jobs, but health issues prevent interior firefighting

(3) - Volunteers that work in the community, capable of interior firefighting

When the FT staff was set up, the need was to handle the administrative tasks of the Stoughton Fire Department. This includes incident report documentation, personnel administration, inspections, design review, equipment inspection/maintenance, etc. We had enough members who were available (worked in town, and call/incident quantities didn't cause issues with work) that we didn't have to be concerned about staffing, Today, that is not the case. It is necessary for the FT staff to be part of every response. It is a noticeable impact when one of the FT staff positions are off (vacation, meetings, sick, trainings/conferences, etc.) We don't have a provision currently to fill that spot in staffing currently. My proposal would be to cover those times that the FT isn't in the station. This equites to about **500 Hours per year.**

PART TIME HOURS		
VACATION	**Wks**	**Hrs**
RIPP	4	160
M. MILLER	3	120
P. GANDER	2	80
Conferences/Training		
RIPP		60
M. MILLER		40
P. GANDER		40
	Hours per Year	500

There is a two layer solution to doing this:

First would be to create a Stipend shift for the FT "shift" period being covered. This would be for SFD members, so that we don't turn them into hourly employees (which we'd do if we paid them on a per hour basis).

Second would be to create a part time employee type, with an hourly wage. This would be a designation for new members (and new membership type) who are relief FF's, specifically for this job. I forsee them being from outside the City of Stoughton, and coming down to work specifically for this job. This position wouldn't be responding as a regular member.

As part of this, other considerations to be made:

- Part time/hourly employee vs stipend, how does this impact current members?
- Part time hourly would require us to hire "outside" members to the department.
- How does this relate to the SFD Retirement Program (what adjustments need to be made)

My desire is to make it possible to allow regular SFD members to sign up first. However, the reality is that most of them have full time jobs, and would need to take off work to fill in. With rare exception, I don't believe the wages would be enough to offset taking off a full time job (or justify the vacation time). So, we may need to dip into hiring FF's from other communities (on their off days) to help fill in.

Duties: The part time staff would assist with rig checks, training, cleaning of the station, repairs, and other assignments as made by the management that day, in addition to responding to calls.

Request #3 – Adding of a 4th Full – Time Staff

Our current weekday, daytime staffing routinely consists of the following:

(3) - FT Staff (Chief, Deputy Chief and Fire Tech) All capable of interior firefighting

(2) - Retired Volunteers (retired from their jobs, but health issues prevent interior firefighting

(3) - Volunteers that work in the community, capable of interior firefighting

As a review, that the FT staff's initial intention was administrative, and not response based, necessarily. However, our current daytime staffing has caused the FT staff to be a necessity on responses. In addition, there are fewer volunteers responding to more calls, causing some strife with their respective employers.

The goal is to have a crew of 4 staff available during the day that can run the "duty crew" calls, eliminating the need to call the entire SFD from work/home for low level calls. The goal is to ease up the load on those SFD members that need to leave work to respond to calls. If we reduce the amount of time they leave work, hopefully when we do need them for larger calls, they won't be restricted from responding.

They daily schedule would look like this:

Officer – Chief Ripp

Operator – DC Miller

FF – P Gander

FF- 4th FF

This crew would allow us handle most any small level call, without calling in the rest of the department. This would be important to have available as we move ahead, and FD gets requested to assist EMS more often (as their call volume increases).

The 4th firefighter would allow some shift of administrative/daily tasks to be shifted a bit. One big item I'd say for sure, is that we'd take ownership of cleaning the SFD, offloading the tasks performed by the City hired janitor. I would also ensure the person we hired was also skilled at administrative tasks/paperwork.