

## Fire department

While firefighters working realities have changed profoundly in recent decades, their structure and operating protocols remain largely the same.

### Current Department staffing

1 Chief

36 firefighters

Staff work 8 hours of a 24-hour shift and are on call for 16 hours with the requirement only to provide response to calls for service

### Fire Department cost

Budget for period ended 12/31/19 - **\$6,802,825**

Revenue 930,374

Net cost **\$5,872,451**

Average fully-loaded budgeted cost **per employee for 2019: \$184,487.76**

### Fire Department calls for service

2019 ambulance calls – 3,171

Data in 2020 from January 1 – July 31

Ambulance calls      1,586

Fire                              46

Other calls                753

Includes: false alarms (297) – the most frequent call for service, rescue and EMS (293), hazardous conditions (59), explosion (30), service call (44) good intent call (27) weather/disaster (2), and special type (1)

### Percent of Calls for Service that are Fire Calls

$1586 + 753 = 2,339$

$46 / 2339 = 2\%$  of all calls to the fire department were for fire related incidents. Approximately 18 of the fire calls involved some type of building fire.

## **2019 Ambulance Service Cost**

Ambulance Service is provided by 8-10 of the 36 firefighters

Ambulance Cost of personnel, medical director and equipment: **610,384**

Ambulance Revenue: **930,374**

Surplus – **319,990**

## **Issues for Council/Mayor Consideration**

- **MOU on the second ambulance:** The income for ambulance service has not substantially increased beyond the revenue received for a single ambulance last year. The council agreed to the MOU with the understanding that the MOU could be terminated if the revenue did not cover cost of the second ambulance and the new firefighters would be laid off.

The council should direct the Mayor to give notice to the Union that to terminate the second ambulance MOU and offer to negotiate another MOU that reduces Fire Department cost and enables retention of the 4 firefighters.

- **Job training:** All new Firefighters are being paid to attend months of training at the NYS Fire Academy and are being trained to respond to emergency services that comprise only 25% of their time when on the job. (if you consider false alarms as a misuse of professional staff time)

The Council should determine if it is cost effective and makes sense to hire EMTs and Paramedics to operate the ambulance service and train the medical professionals as volunteer firefighters to supplement the core professional firefighting staff?

- **Contract Services:** Investigate the impact of contracting with CVPH on the cost and level of emergency medical services to the citizens of Plattsburgh.
- **Other issues**
  - Expand the role of the fire department in fire prevention activity in the city
  - Work with the Union to explore the issues associate with developing a combination Fire department by reactivating Rescue Hose 5 and developing a military staffing model to supplement the professional staff.