



STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 18, 2017

REGULAR

ITEM #: 19

TO: City Council

FROM: Greg Malmquist, Fire Chief

AGENDA ITEM: Fire Department Staffing

REVIEWED BY: City Administrator Kristina Handt and Public Safety Committee

BACKGROUND:

At the June 13, 2017 Council Workshop, Council directed the Public Safety committee to research the matter of fire department staffing and come back with recommendations.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

How should the Council plan to staff the Fire Department to maintain current service levels?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The Public Safety Committee is recommending the Council approve Option B. Option B would provide part time firefighters in the station from 6am-6pm, Sunday through Saturday. The Administrative Assistant would not be used to cover any of these shifts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Based on Option B, as recommended by the Public Safety committee and Staff, the impact would be \$175,331.52 in annual wages, benefits and taxes; \$7,077.40 per Firefighter hired as well as ongoing annual costs associated with training and other requirements.

OPTIONS:

- 1) Option A as presented, part time shifts, utilizing the current Administrative Assistant to fill shifts.
- 2) Option B as presented, part time shifts, not utilizing the current Administrative Assistant to fill shifts.
- 3) Option C as presented, utilizing full time staff.

RECOMMENDATION: It is the recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, (by a 3-0 vote) and Fire Department Staff to move forward with the following:

Motion to approve Option B as presented, which is the hiring of Part Time Firefighters working no more than 24 scheduled hours per week, to cover shifts from 6 am-noon and noon-6pm, Sunday through Saturday. And to also approve the associated job description and advertise the positions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Copy of presentation
- Job Description

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS
on
FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING**

AGENDA

- ISSUE
- TERMINOLOGY
- HISTORICAL DATA
- STAFFING CONCERNS/TRENDS
- WHERE ARE WE NOW?
- STAFFING COSTS COMPARISON
- COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

ISSUE

How should the Council plan to staff the Fire Department to maintain current service levels?

TERMINOLOGY

- **POC, (Paid On Call)** – Firefighters that respond when paged. Formerly known as “Volunteers” until over time they were paid and recognized as city employees.
- **Duty Crews** – (Lake Elmo specific) Personnel, assigned to a specific window of time, during which, they have committed to be available to respond. They will remain, “in the area” during this period. There are many variations of this throughout the fire service, FT, PT or POC staff in the station, labeled “Shifts”, “Squads”, “Duty Shifts” or “Standby Crew”.
- **Shared Services** – Sharing of resources, (equipment, response personnel, administrative personnel, training, facilities, etc) as well as sharing the associated costs.
- **Mutual Aid** – Sharing of resources, locally, regionally, statewide and nationally. Resources from other agencies respond WHEN REQUESTED by primary agency. Primary agency must request specific resource needs. *(This process has been in place for years and used by Lake Elmo. Utilized when local resources are exhausted or exceeded)*

NFPA Definition - **3.3.2.2 Mutual Aid.** Reciprocal assistance by emergency services under a written plan among AHJs that is part of communication center's dispatch protocol.

- **Auto Aid** – Sharing of resources, locally, regionally, statewide and nationally. Resources from other agencies respond automatically based on predetermined response needs identified by primary agency for specific incidents. Additional “groups” of resources can be requested by additional, predetermined “ALARMS”. *(Currently utilized on a very limited basis due to the restrictions of the current CAD system used by Wash. Cty. Dispatch)*

NFPA Definition - **3.3.2.1* Automatic Aid.** A plan developed between two or more fire departments for immediate joint response on first alarms. [1142, 2012]

- What has Lake Elmo Fire Department done to improve Retention?

- Implemented “Stay at Home Duty Crews”, (unique to Lake Elmo)
- Increased Response Time Requirements
- Reduced Response Percentage Requirements
- Implemented “Incentive Pay”
- Implemented Daytime Duty Crews
- Increased and Expanded Pay
- Vacation
- Leave of Absence
- Created Lieutenants positions

HISTORICAL DATA

- December, 2004 - “FIRE PROTECTION NEEDS” STUDY”, Submitted by Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, This study primarily focused on fire station locations with regards to response times and warning siren locations. Most of the “detail” in the report related to inadequacies and future needs of fire stations. Staffing information, mentioned need for “2 full time fire employees” and cited 2000 census statistics for hiring 18-25 year olds. Also focused in on 4 and 2 station model with both 4 and 4 ½ minute response (calculated from “In-Service” to “On Scene”)
- September 2011 - “Feasibility Study for Shared or Cooperative Fire and Emergency Services” - Stillwater, Lake Elmo, Mahtomedi
- January 10, 2012 – Council workshop. Fire department presented current level of service being delivered and asked Council for direction on future level of service for planning purposes. Fire department was directed to maintain current level of service.
- November 13, 2013 – First meeting of the Public Safety Committee. Began discussion on recruitment/staffing. Many ideas proposed and pursued during this and future meetings.

Newsletter	Solicit Businesses	Mailings	Cable Channel	Increase Response
Times	Reduce Requirements	Explorer Program	Public Works Staff	Ads w/LMC
Demographics	Responding to Scenes	Open Houses	HOA’s	Promo Video
Incentives	Retention	Turnover	Morale	Rotary Meeting
Community Meetings-Surveys				

- June 19, 2014 – The following topics discussed by Public Safety Committee:

Response Times	Staffing	Maplewood Model	POC vs PT vs FT	Shifts
Service Level	Shared Services Study from September 2011		Staffing Costs	

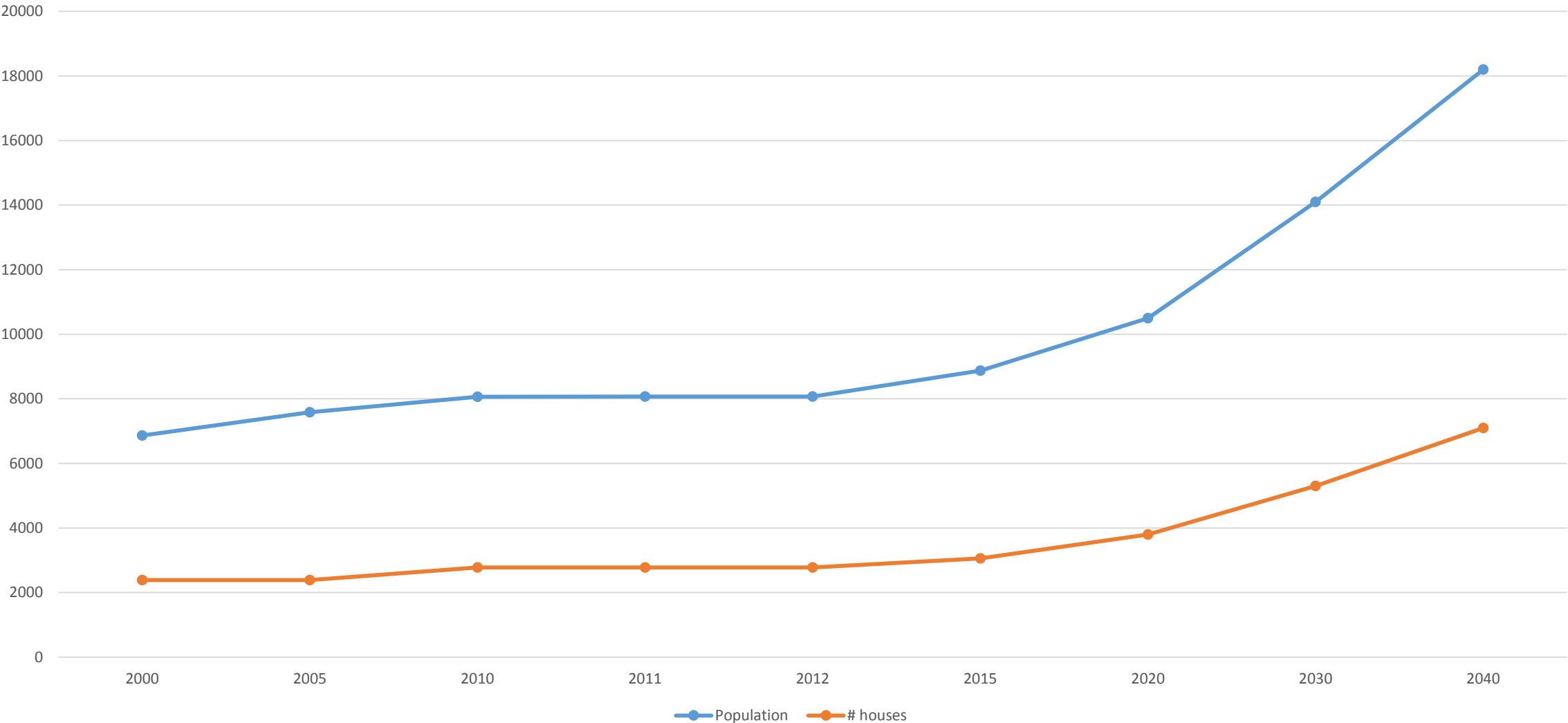
- July 2014 – Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) releases “EMPTY BOOTS, QUIET SIRENS” report. This study looked at “The State of Non-Career Firefighting in Minnesota” and how it relates to Recruitment/Retention, changing Community Demographics, greater demands on fire departments as well as several other areas.

HISTORICAL DATA

- September 18, 2014 – Maplewood Fire Chief Steve Lukin presented to the committee the “Maplewood Model” of staffing with PT shifts and the process they had recently gone through regarding staffing and building a station. This presentation followed a previous meeting between Lake Elmo and Maplewood Chief Officers to discuss these topics.
- December 1, 2015 – “Single Fire Station Concept” was presented to Council on the recommendation from the Public Safety Committee, to deal with staffing and response concerns.
- August 23, 2016 – Council Workshop, jointly with Public Safety Committee and Members of Fire Department to discuss “Staffing, Shared Services and other Fire Agreements”
- June 2017 – City Administrator and Fire Chief reached out to bordering communities to explore “options”.
- June 13, 2017 – Council Workshop, Council discussed “Fire Department Staffing” and directed Public Safety Committee to research matter and come back with recommendations.

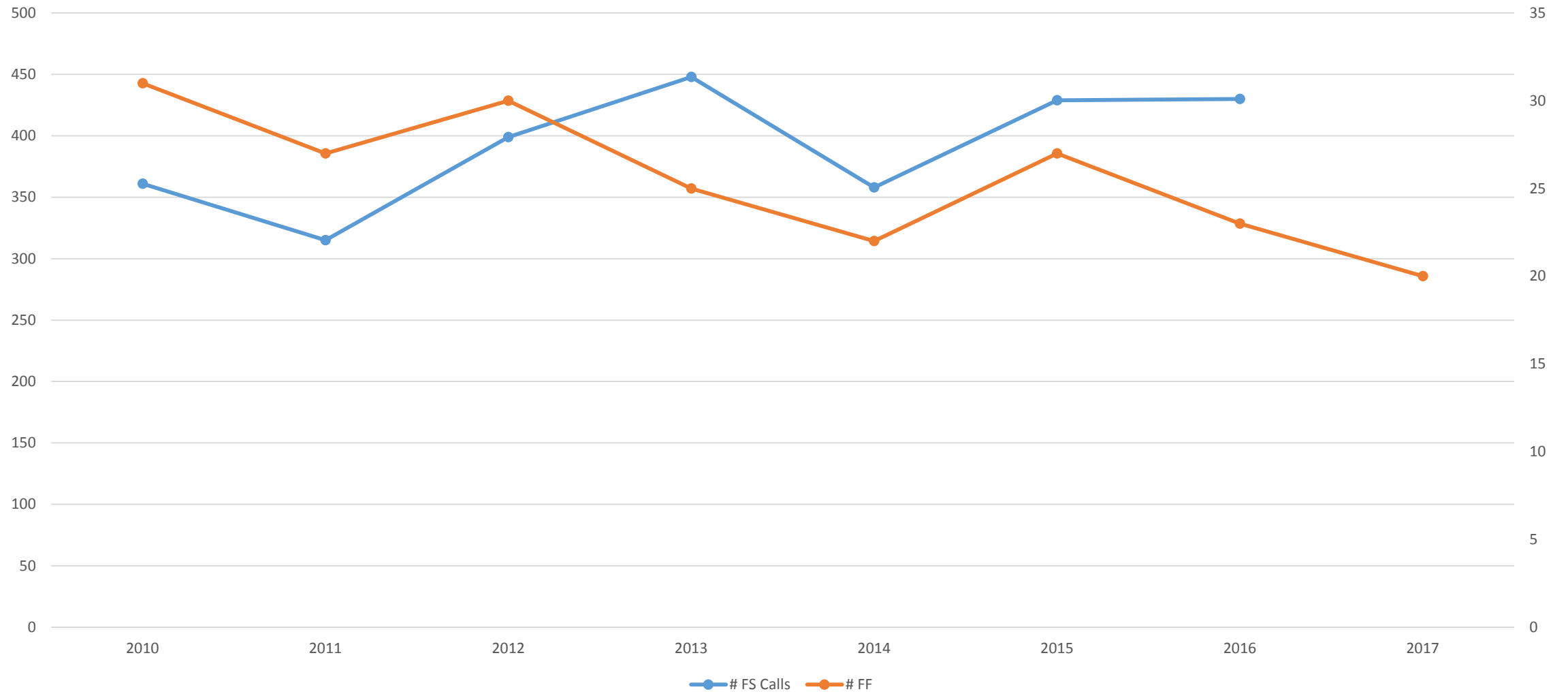
City of Lake Elmo Growth

(from 2015 City of Lake Elmo Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Met Council Community Page)



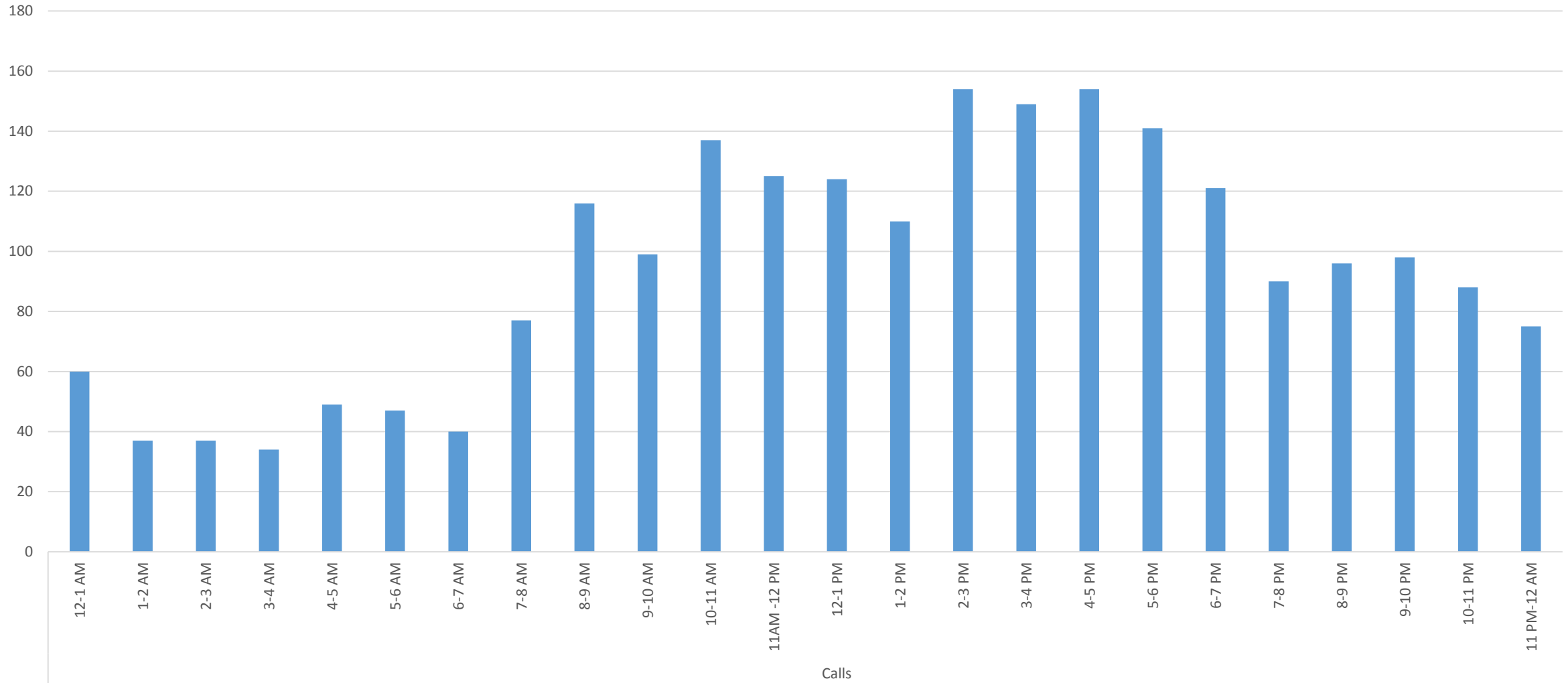
City of Lake Elmo

Calls per Year vs. LEFD Staffing

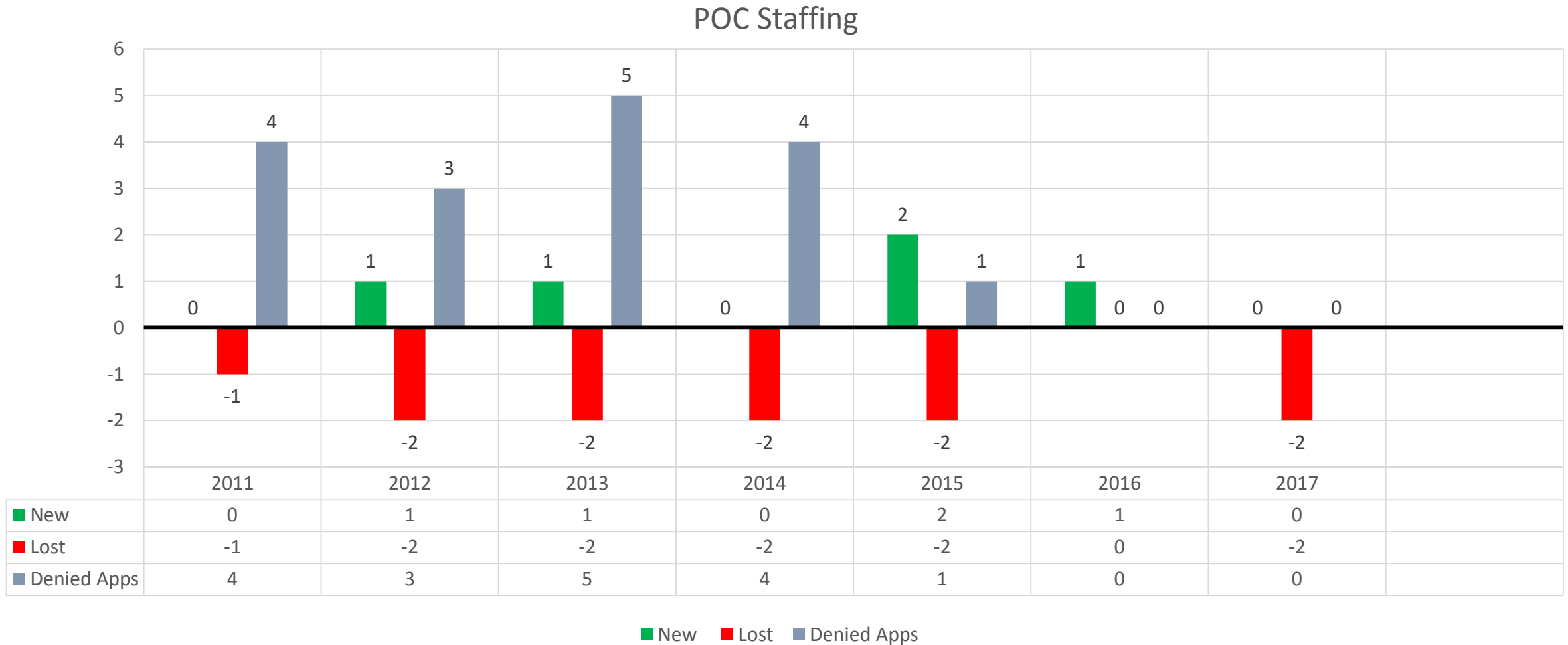


City of Lake Elmo

Total Fire Department Emergency Response by Hour 2012-2017



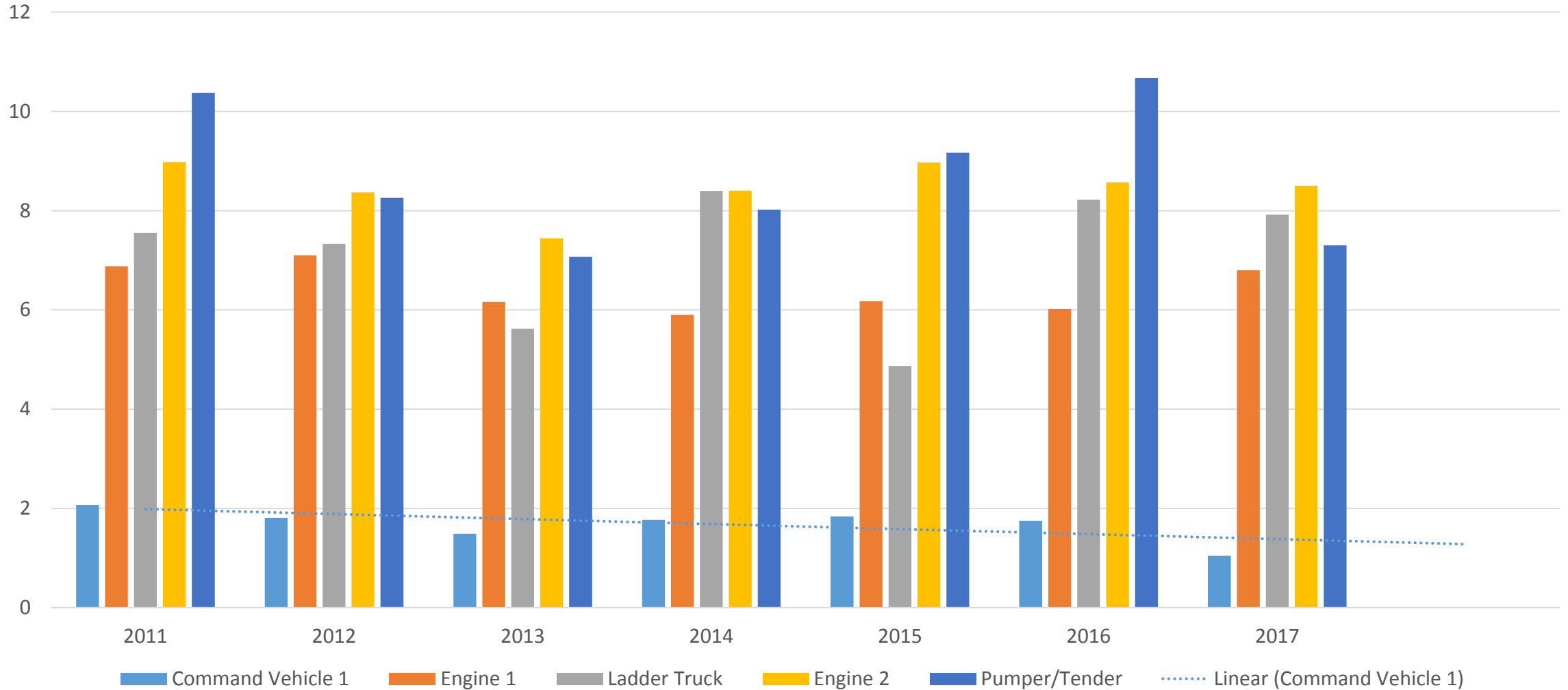
Recruitment/Retention Trends



Reasons for denial – Failed background check, failed psychological evaluation, reside outside response requirement of 5 ½ minutes, outside Lake Elmo or neighboring community, attended drill and decided not for them, withdrew application.

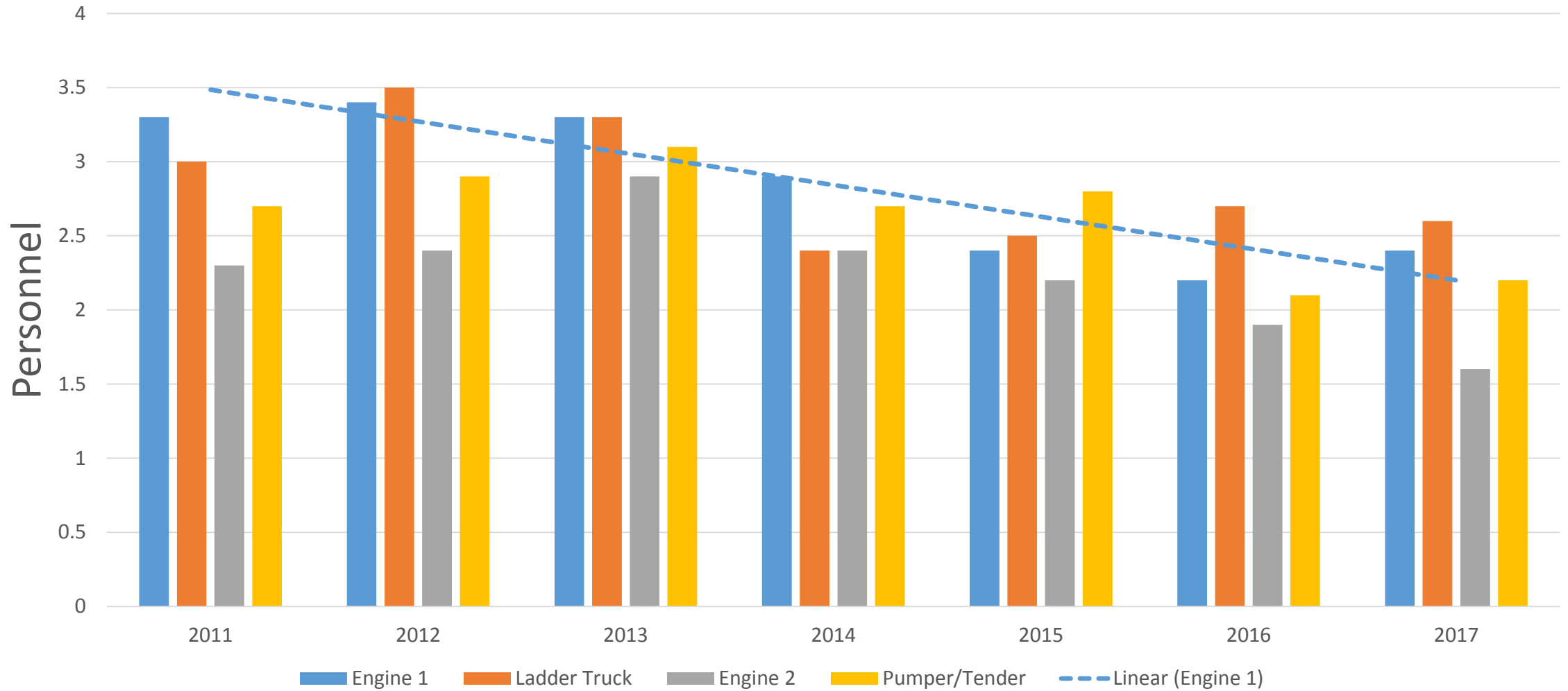
Dispatch to Truck Leaving Station Time

Minutes



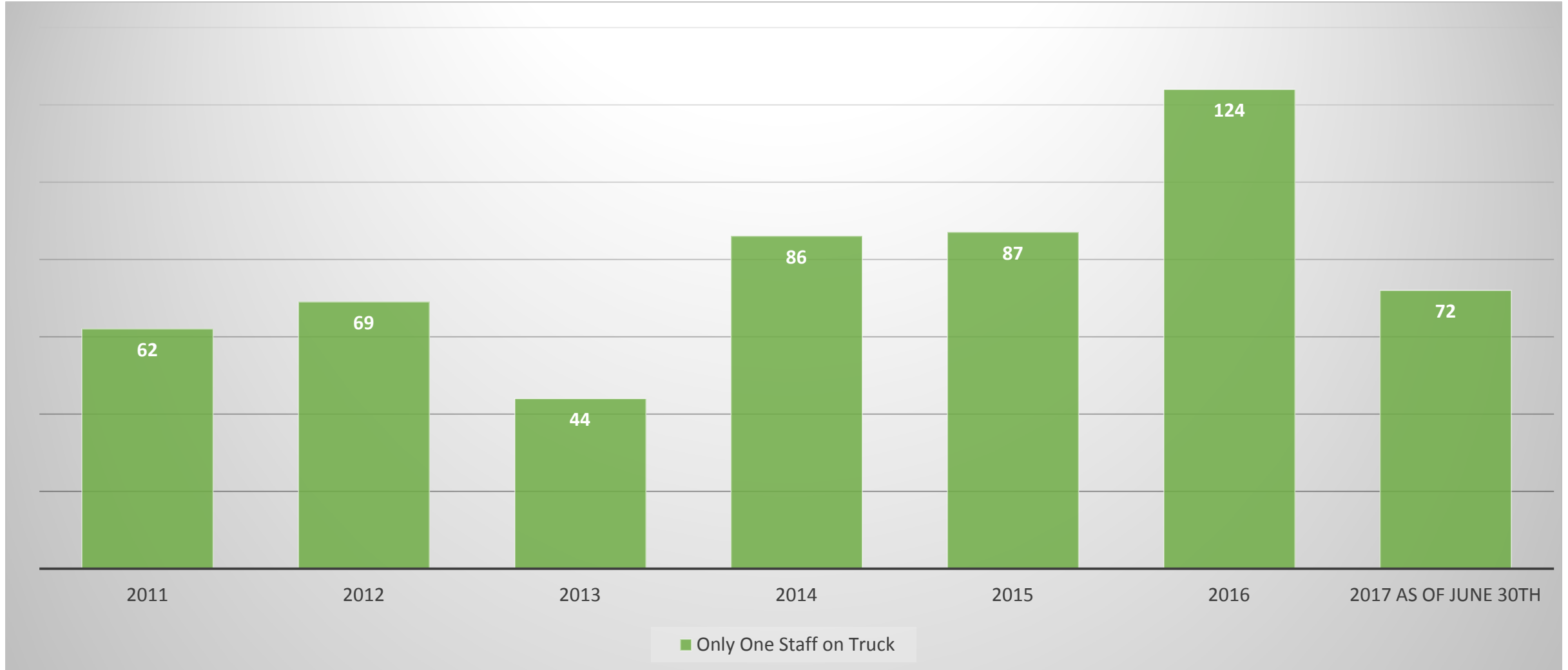
Average Number of Responders per Vehicle

2011-2016



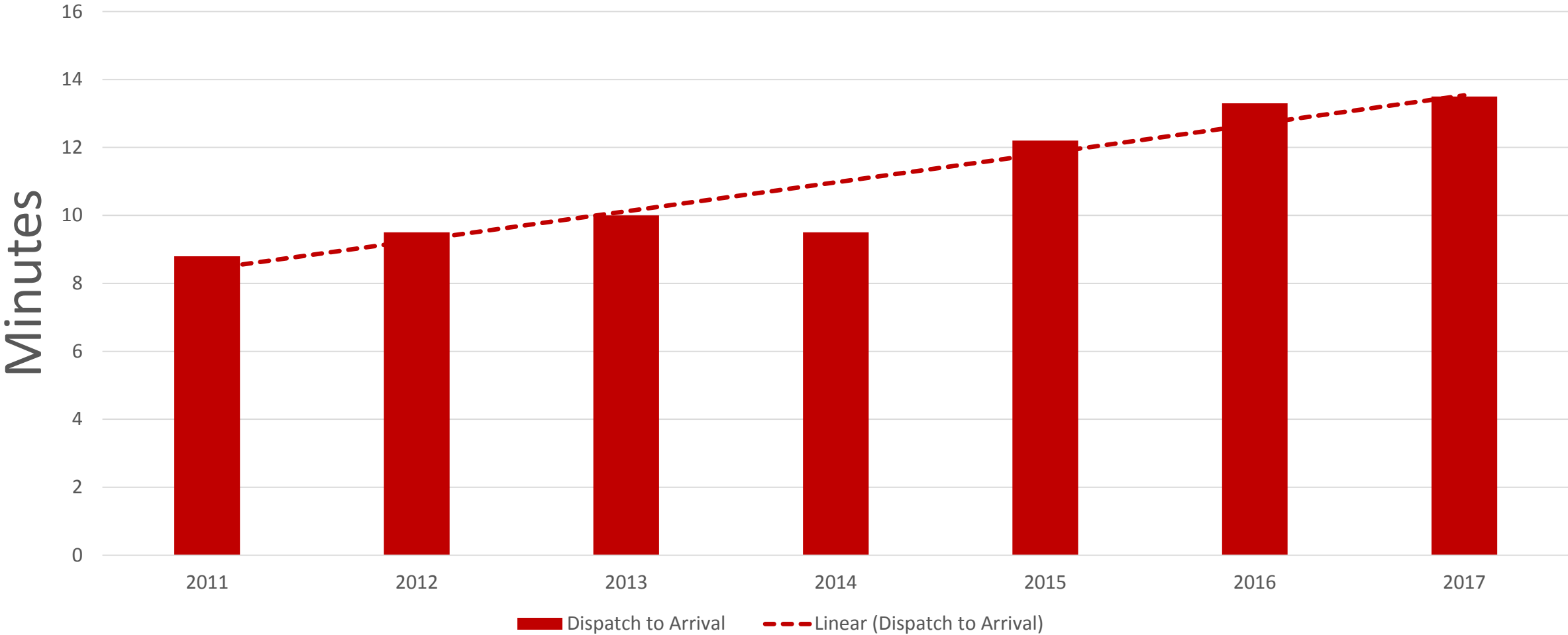
Number of Times, Vehicle Responded to an Emergency Call With Only One Firefighter in the Truck

(Excluding Command Vehicles)

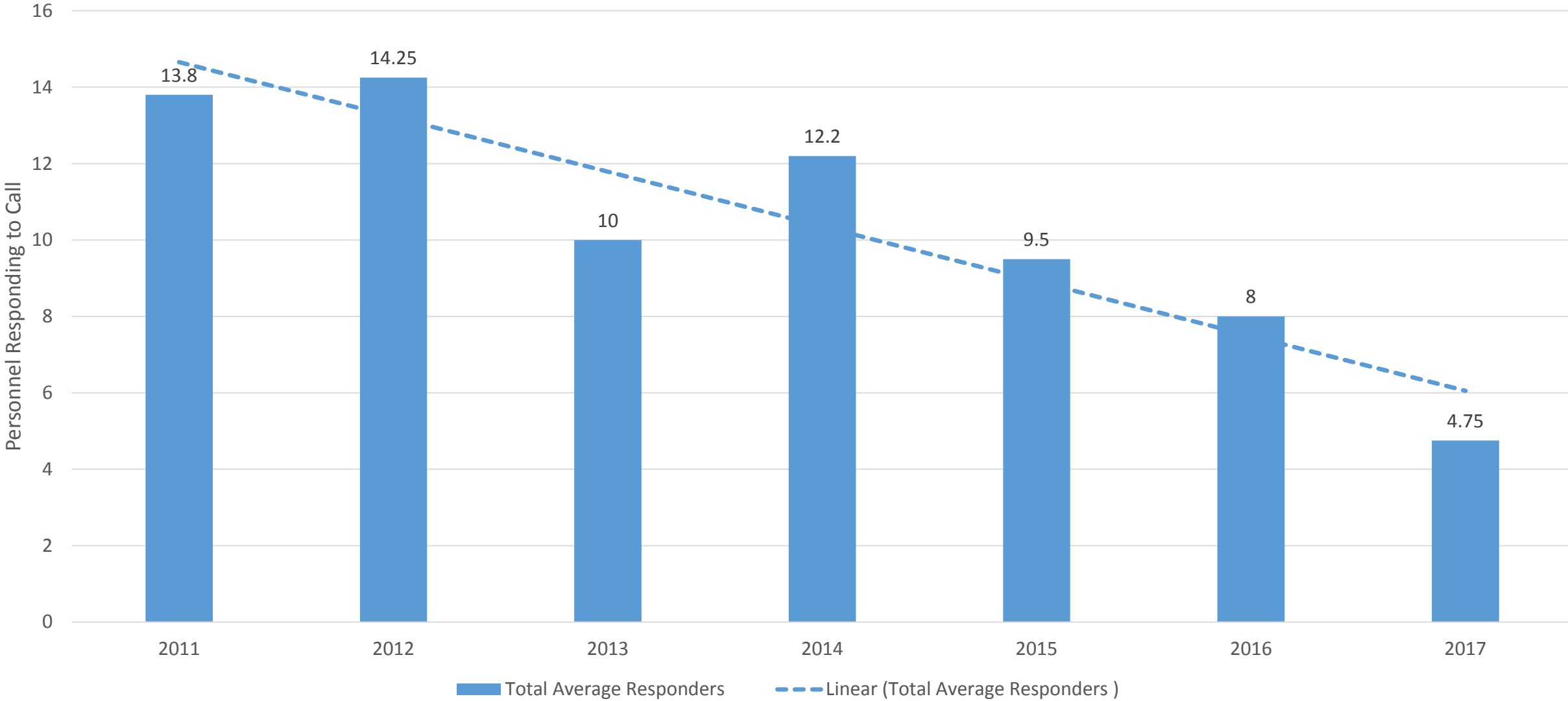


STRUCTURE FIRE RESPONSES ONLY

Dispatch to Arrival



STRUCTURE FIRE RESPONSES ONLY



PROJECTED STAFFING COST COMPARISON

	# shifts	Wage	Hours per week	Weekly cost	Annual cost	# Personnel needed to cover.
OPTION A - PART TIME, Capped at 24 hours per week						
Coverage, Sun - Sat, 6:00 am - noon and noon - 6:00 pm. 2 - 6 hour shifts per day 2 personnel per shift, in station with duties	24/wk	\$20.07/hr (Includes Police/Fire PERA)	144 Admin Asst. would cover remaining 24 hrs.	\$2,890.08	\$150,284.16	5.2
OPTION B - PART TIME, Capped at 24 hours per week						
Coverage, Sun - Sat, 6:00 am - noon and noon - 6:00 pm. 2 - 6 hour shifts per day 2 personnel per shift, in station with duties	28/wk	\$20.07/hr (Includes Police/Fire PERA)	168	\$3,371.76	\$175,331.52	6
OPTION C - FULL TIME						
Coverage, Sun - Sat, 6:00 am - noon and noon - 6:00 pm. 2 personnel per shift, in station with duties		\$26.49/hr. (Includes benefits)	168	\$4,450.32	\$231,416.64	6

Additional Considerations, when comparing Part Time to Full Time – Even with hiring Firefighters trained to minimum standards, there are still costs associated with each hire. With a greater turnover rate with Part Time vs Full Time, these costs begin to add up.

FIREFIGHTER COST	
Pre-Placement w/ Drug Test, (on-going every 1-3 years)	\$245.65
Psychological Evaluation	\$415.00
Hep B Series	\$156.00
Annual FIT Test	\$25.00
Annual Training	\$545.50
Uniform	\$1,159.30
Turnout Gear, (Replaced every 10 years)	\$4,000.95
Pager	\$530.00
TOTAL	\$7,077.40

Additional Duties of Firefighters on Shift

- Fire Hydrants
 - Initial and Annual Flow Testing
 - Annual Maintenance
 - GPS and ID labeling
 - Clearing in winter
- Inspections (During business hours)
 - Annual follow up inspections. Update information. Identify corrections.
 - Identify serious violations to be handled by Fire Inspector
 - Update pre-plans.
- Daily Truck and Equipment Checks
 - Better maintenance
 - Lower maintenance costs
 - Less “Out of Service” time.
- Fire Prevention/Fire Education
 - Greater attendance at community events
 - Ability to develop more programs such as in home inspections of detectors, etc.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS

City of Lake Elmo

Job Title: Firefighter

Department: Fire

Status: Casual/part-time

Reporting Relationship: Reports to Fire Department Officers

Position Details:

Perform emergency work in emergency situations for the protection of life and property from fire and other hazards, as well as the treatment of emergency medical problems.

General Duties/Essential Functions:

Perform fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical care as necessary using safe and appropriate methods under the direct supervision of the O.I.C. using the Incident Command System.

Operate and perform required maintenance of all department apparatus and equipment.

Operate apparatus and equipment in a safe and appropriate manner.

Operation of computers, Microsoft Office and its components, (Word, Excel, Publisher, etc.), as well as various office equipment, (copier, fax, scanner, phones, etc.). This also includes use of all software programs that support department operations, including, but not limited to (Image trend, IAMRESPONDING, Target Solutions).

Support of clerical and administrative staff in keeping official records, data entry, providing support to the fire command staff.

Participate in fire, rescue and emergency medical training as directed by Department Policy and Standard Operating Guidelines or as directed by Command Officers.

Perform work assignments and station duties as assigned by Officers of department.

Perform and conduct Fire Prevention/Fire Education activities as required. This may include, but is not limited to: assisting in the development of programs, ordering of supplies, scheduling of events and identifying needs in community.

Support City Staff as it pertains to inspections and maintaining critical infrastructure, such as hydrants.

Establish and maintain professional working relationships with coworkers. Establish and maintain professional working relationships with people outside of the department. Establish and maintain professional working relationships with people of different cultures, backgrounds, or values. Work with others on a team, task force, or in other work units. Listen and demonstrate an understanding of others' perspectives, problems, or questions. Interact informally with other members of department for prolonged periods of either monotony or extreme stress. Respect the privacy of coworkers.

Support the goals and policies of the department. Foster a positive attitude toward department goals. Work within the framework of departmental Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines.

While these areas are the primary focus of the position, we believe strongly in teamwork and employees will be called upon to perform a variety of duties as a part of their role with the City.

Position Requirements

Minimum Qualifications

- Must be 18 years of age by date of hire.
- Must have high school diploma or General Education Degree (GED) by date of hire.
- Possess and maintain a valid Minnesota driver's license.
- Must pass background check.
- Must pass physical ability test.
- Must pass pre-placement medical exam.
- Must pass psychological exam.

- Must be currently state certified or licensed as Firefighter I & II, (must include HazMat Operations). Must include copy of certification with application.
- State Certified First Responder
- Current Certification in Rescuer CPR with AHA.
- Working knowledge in the operation of various office equipment, (copier, fax, scanner, phones, etc.)
- Working knowledge in the operation of computers, Microsoft Office and its components, (Word, Excel, Publisher, etc.).

Preferred Qualifications

- Minimum of two years firefighting experience.
- Current MN State Certification as Fire Apparatus Operator, (FAO)
- Current MN State Certification as Fire Inspector I
- Live within 10 minutes' drive time of station.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Knowledge of firefighting equipment practices, principles, methods and techniques used in modern fire suppression
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Skilled in listening and problem solving
- Operate both as a member of a team and independently at incidents of uncertain duration
- Operate in enclosed or confined spaces.

Physical and Mental Requirements: While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to sit, talk, or hear; stand; walk; use hand to finger; handle; or operate objects, tools or controls; and reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally asked to climb or balance, stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl; and taste or smell.

The employee must frequently lift to 10 pounds and occasionally lift and/move up to 100 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this position include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and the ability to adjust the focus.

*** The physical demands described here are representative to those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations can be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

Working Conditions: Work is performed primarily in the office, vehicles, and outdoor settings, in all weather conditions, including temperature extremes, during shifts. Work is often performed in emergency and stressful situations. The employee is exposed to loud noises and hazards associated with fighting fires and rendering emergency medical assistance, including, but not limited to smoke noxious odors, fumes, chemicals, liquid chemicals, solvents and oils.

Competencies Common to All City Positions:

- Develop, maintain a thorough working knowledge of, and comply with all departmental and applicable City policies and procedures
- Demonstration by personal example the spirit of service, excellence, and integrity expected from all staff.
- Develop respectful and cooperative working relationships with co-workers, including willing assistance to newer staff so job responsibilities can be performed with confidence as quickly as possible.
- Confer regularly with and keep immediate supervisor informed of all important matters which pertain to the applicable job functions and responsibilities.
- Represent the City of Lake Elmo in a professional manner to the public, outside contacts and constituencies.

*** The work environment characteristics described here are representative to those an employee encounters while performing essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations can be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*