



STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 9, 2019

DISCUSSION

AGENDA ITEM: Request for Proposals/Qualifications for Fire Department Operational Study
SUBMITTED BY: Kristina Handt, City Administrator

BACKGROUND:

One of the highest priority goals of the City's 2019-2020 work plan is to study and address fire service staffing needs.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the City conduct an operational study of the fire department? If so, what should be included in the scope of services?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

A number of other cities within the metro area have completed operational studies of their fire departments over the last few years. The scope of services in those studies have included:

Falcon Heights:

- Review response times and benchmark against state and national standards for volunteer/paid-on-call departments including NFPA #1720, ISO and CAFI standards.
- Review department organizational structure and workplace culture and make recommendations on potential improvements.
- Gather input from stakeholders, including members of the fire department, city council, city administration, city representatives.
- Provide a review of current compensation structure as compared to similar cities/departments in Minnesota. The City will work with the successful consultant to identify the cities/departments to compare with within the scope of services.
- Analysis of current staffing levels and recommendation of appropriate levels to ensure effective response times; compare staffing levels to similar metropolitan departments. Assess ability to recruit and retain paid on-call personnel.
- Review of training procedures and record keeping and provide recommendations on the improvement thereof.
- Analysis of current equipment status and future needs including a proposed timeframe for replacement or upgrade.
- Comparison of current departmental budget as compared to similar metropolitan departments including personnel costs, vehicle maintenance and training budgets.
- Review the existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and make recommendations for improvements or enhancements.
- Provide estimate of costs associated with receiving comparable services from an outside agency/fire department.

Chanhassen:

- Establish and define the current conditions of the Fire Department
 - o Establish benchmarks and identify how the department currently measures up to them
 - o Identify measurable goals that balance needs of the Department with the City as a whole
- Review current staffing and training needs
 - o Use of full-time staff

- o Department's overall organization structure
- o Paid on call staffing
- o Training
- o Potential for resource sharing/development of Fire District
- Pay and Benefits
 - o Call pay rate
 - o Pension
 - o Officer Compensation
- Equipment and Capital Needs
 - o Buildings
 - o Vehicles and Trucks
 - o Small equipment, gear, and hoses

Waseca:

I. Establish and define the current conditions of the Waseca Fire Department, including the providing of EMS, Fire, technical rescue and hazmat services (where we are now):

- a. Identify cost effective benchmarks the department should follow on an ongoing basis and determine how the department currently measures up to those benchmarks.
- b. Identify a set of cost effective measurable goals that balance efficiency, effectiveness and safety. These goals should meet the needs of the department as well as be in the best interests/value of the city as a whole.

II. Review current staffing and training needs and assess what is needed going forward:

- a. Department Staffing & Organizational Structure will be evaluated against other models for efficiency and effectiveness. Pros and cons for alternatives should be outlined clearly with recommendations for the most cost-effective models, as well as alternatives that take organizational culture into account. The evaluation should pay particular attention to the following areas:
 1. Evaluation of benefits of a full-time Fire Chief.
 2. Evaluation of use of full-time staff for 24-7 coverage at Fire Station and alternative structures to meet operational needs (i.e. duty crews, On-Call only).
 1. Needed operational changes to meet daily needs under alternatives.
 3. Paid On-Call Officer structure, numbers, job duties.
 4. Paid On-Call staff hierarchy.
 5. Response practices alternatives for effective and efficient use of Paid On-Call staff.
- b. Training needs for paid on-call staff
 1. Evaluate current training program based on State and other requirements.
 2. Provide recommendations on changes to required trainings.
 3. Provide recommendations on incentives for training beyond basic requirements, including internal and external certifications in the best interest of the Fire Department.
- c. Recruitment and retention
 1. Evaluation of current Paid On-Call pay rate.
 2. Evaluation of current pension benefit amount, formula and increases.
 3. Recommend changes to current recruitment strategies and compensation and benefits structures based on real-world successes with alternate models.

III. Equipment & Capital Needs (assess current conditions and future needs):

- a. Vehicles and Trucks:
 1. Based on current conditions in the City what are the appropriate capabilities that the City needs to maintain regarding apparatus.
 2. Identify cost effective alternatives for replacing the City's current apparatus based on the City's needs and current capabilities.
 3. Evaluate the current conditions of the city's apparatus.
 4. Establish an appropriate replacement schedule for apparatus based on best practices and cost effectiveness.

b. Small equipment, gear, hose and other equipment:

1. Develop a schedule for safety compliance of gear and other equipment needs, including hoses.
2. Develop replacement schedules to be used for each of the various types of equipment.

Minnetonka:

Objective. The objective of the project is to develop a plan for guiding the future delivery of fire and rescue services to the Minnetonka community.

Scope of Work. The project will produce a plan to include a standard of cover study that will determine whether the department currently is properly deployed to meet its community's risks and expectations including the current staffing plan.

- The strengths and weaknesses of the current method of deployment of staffing and resources will be identified including determining if they are properly deployed to meet the community's risks and expectations.

Deliverables. This project is expected to meet the above-noted objective within the described scope and produce a realistic plan for meeting Minnetonka's future fire protection needs. At a minimum, the plan will provide the following specific deliverables.

- a. Identification of 2018 baseline Fire Department services, service levels and budgets, including response times, ISO rating, staffing, facilities, major equipment and any other applicable factors (this should be a minor part of the final report).
- b. Description of impacts that key findings and other factors (described in the background section above) will have on each of the baseline services identified.
- c. Outline of desired short-term and long-term services provided and service levels. This may include new services not currently provided, and the need for expanded, reduced, joint or eliminated services. Included are appropriate items that will meet the proposed standards of cover including response times/effective response force targets.
- d. Description of recommended options for providing desired services and service levels. This will include personnel, operations, facilities, major equipment and other associated costs, along with potential options and phases in which recommendations could be implemented.
- e. A determination and recommendation on the sustainability of the current staffing plan, whether additional career members or part-time members should be added or eliminated and the deployment of personnel to maximize effectiveness.
- f. Identification of the barriers to achieving the desired service levels.

Maplewood:

Services to be Provided:

1. Completion of a professional summary report in a presentation format that includes supporting data and supplemental information that minimally identifies the following:
 - A. Standards of service
 - B. Response times
 - C. Number and locations of fire stations
 - D. Services offered
 - E. Department organization
 - F. Policies
 - G. Staffing
 - H. Equipment
 - I. Facilities
 - J. Workload
 - K. Service demands
 - L. Response reliability

2. Completion of a performance management audit that involves an analysis of baseline information, including, but not limited to:
 - A. Previous studies and planning documents
 - B. Annual reports and records
 - C. Response and deployment planning data
 - D. Budget and expenditure reports
 - E. Billing processes and documentation
 - F. Relevant performance documentation
 - G. CAD and Call for Service data
3. Divide development of RFQ and station placement/response time study and the RFP development for the public – private partnership so we can see the specific costs.
4. Conduct a thorough analysis and evaluation of functions, programs and services provided by the fire department's existing operations.
5. Identify and document specific areas for improvement; make recommendations based on benchmarks and best practices including but not limited to clinical care, operational performance and metrics, fiscal policies and processes, regulatory environment, community engagement and population health initiatives and organization structure and effectiveness.
6. Provide suggestions for implementation strategy.
7. Identify innovations, practices, structures and measures that would improve services through efficiency.
8. Review emergency calls for service and analyze how the calls affect the ability to meet the City's goals.
9. Review associated factors including but not limited to station locations, emergency call demands and resources that affect the ability to meet the City's expectations.
10. Conduct a geospatial and call demand analysis that accounts for concurrent call demand and resource availability.
11. Anticipate future demands on the fire department based on growth, demographics and the department's service to the City.
12. Assess how the fire department's future demands may be carried out in a more cost effective manner through management, operations, staffing and performance changes.
13. Provide comparisons to relevant communities and industry standards.
14. Recommend an action plan or alternative plan(s) for the fire department to carry out its duties while maintaining high standards.
15. Identify actions to be taken with regard to facilities, service, personnel and equipment levels.
16. Analyze short-term, mid-term and long-range cost implications to any recommendations.
17. Provide data tables, supporting materials and raw data to the City of Maplewood.
18. Present findings to Maplewood staff, at a minimum through an initial findings briefing and onsite presentation of the final study. This shall consist of, at a minimum an evaluation of operations and decisions, findings, recommendations, implementation strategies and timeframes.

19. Attend and/or present findings at a City Council meeting or work session at the discretion of the City.

The purpose of the discussion of the work session is to get Council feedback on the scope of services to be covered in the request for proposals/quotations. Based upon the state goal in the work plan, I would recommend the scope of services focus on establishing benchmarks after review of similar cities and review of and recommendations regarding:

- organizational structure and workplace culture,
- compensation structure (paid on call rate, pension, etc),
- recruitment strategies,
- appropriate staffing levels,
- training,
- record keeping,
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs),
- inspection program,
- fire prevention program and community education/outreach

A number of the other cities above had also included a review of equipment and recommended replacement schedule. Would Council like to expand the goal to include a review of equipment as well? I would not recommend a facility study as part of the scope of this RFP/Q, since that was done in 2017 by BKV Group.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Costs are unknown until proposals are received. Other cities have paid \$40,000 or more for this type of study.

OPTIONS:

- 1) Direct staff to prepare an RFP/Q for a fire department operational study
- 2) Do not proceed with a study at this time