

City of Hudson, Ohio

Memorandum

To: Hudson City Council & Mayor Anzevino

From: Thomas J. Sheridan, City Manager; Jerry Varnes, Fire Chief

Date: April 4, 2025

Subject: Recommendation for Fire & EMS Staffing Model and Facility Renovations

Introduction:

This memorandum presents a comprehensive staffing model and associated facility renovation plan for the Hudson Fire & EMS Department. The recommendations are based on a thorough review of the Fire and EMS Staffing & Facility Needs Study by the Council subcommittee, including current service demands, response time objectives, and the need to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

The current levels of EMS staffing are satisfactory. Their living quarters are outdated, beyond their useful life, inefficient, and safety measures need to be implemented.

The Fire response times need to be improved, and by having firefighters stationed at the Fire Department will help reduce the response time for the first fire engine to arrive at the fire. The City needs a minimum of 4 firefighters at the station to answer fire calls during each shift, to reduce the reliance on paid volunteers that need to drive to the station from their homes.

The City Fire and EMS will set a response time goal for the City, and we will report on this annually at budget discussions with City Council and the Mayor on how we are doing this goal for each department.

Staffing and Hiring Process:

The City recently completed the initial phase of our firefighter recruitment process, receiving approximately 72 applications, including 29 from existing city fire staff. To ensure a timely and efficient selection process, we recommend proceeding with interviews in mid-April 2025, with completion targeted for May 2025, pending Council authorization.

A critical consideration in our hiring timeline is the acquisition of individual "Turn-out Gear" for external candidates. This equipment, which takes approximately four months to procure, will necessitate a phased onboarding approach to the hybrid model. Our existing Fire staff, who already possess the necessary gear, can be integrated into shifts starting as early as May or June 2025, if we have a min. of a 4-person firefighter staff.

Phase 1: Daytime Staffing (7:00 AM - 7:00 PM)

Our initial staffing strategy focuses on daytime coverage first, which represents a significant portion.(Approximately 70% of our call volume according to the study) To meet the minimum requirement of 3 firefighters and 1 supervisor per shift, we propose the following:

- **Weekend Staffing (Saturday-Sunday):** 3 part-time firefighters and 1 supervisor.
- **Weekday Staffing (Monday-Friday):** Utilizing 2 existing fire supervisors within the department (no additional cost) and hiring 2 additional part-time firefighters.

This phase can be implemented without immediate facility renovations, allowing for a swift improvement in daytime response times during the weekdays and weekends. It is important to note that the timeline for weekday staffing will be contingent on the timely acquisition of the turnout gear for the new hires, since most of our current paid-on-call volunteers have other jobs. This timeline could be sooner if we have current staff available for these shifts.

Phase 1 - Daytime Staffing Costs		Additional Costs	Tentative Timeline Start
Weekend Staffing 7 am to 7 pm, Saturday - Sunday			
	3 - Part-time Firefighters	\$98,527	May, 2025
	1 - Supervisor	\$39,685	May, 2025
Weekday Staffing 7 am to 7 pm, Monday - Friday			
	Use 2 Existing Fire Supervisors (No Additional Cost)	\$0	
	2 - Part-time Firefighters	\$164,212	Oct, 2025 (*A)
Phase 1 Total Additional Operating Cost		\$302,423	
PHASE 1 NOTES:			
NO Facility renovations are needed for this phase. The new part-time staff's turn-out gear will dictate weekday shift timelines.			
Response times for 7 am to 7 pm on weekdays and weekends will meet the standard response times.			
A: This is based on a worse-case scenario if we cannot use some of our current staff to cover during the day.			

Phase A&B: Facility Renovations

To accommodate the implementation of evening shifts, facility renovations are essential for this shift. We propose the following timeline:

Phase A & B - Facility Renovations to accommodate Evening Shifts	Tentative Dates
Design and Construction Timeline:	
Request for Proposals - Final Design Renovations	May, 2025
Design all Phases	June - September, 2025
Permit review	September, 2025
Bidding Phase 1 & 2, with alternate bid items for phase 2	October, 2025
Construction on the renovations	November - April, 2026

Phase A of the renovations is needed for evening staffing in the Fire Department. The facility renovations will be bid as one bid package, with an alternate bid item for Phase B of the renovations. Upon completion of the facility renovations, we will implement evening shift staffing, mirroring the daytime staffing model above.

The conceptual ESTIMATED COSTS of all renovations in Phase A & B are shown on the K2M Exhibit. Based on the structural condition of the existing building, a 20-year bond would be issued for the renovations.

Following the completion of the above renovations in April of 2026, the City will be positioned to schedule evening staff by May 2026. This is essential to meet standard response times during evening hours.

Phase 2: Evening Staffing (7:00 PM - 7:00 AM)

Phase 2 - Evening Staffing Costs			
Weeknight Staffing 7 pm to 7 am, Monday - Friday		Additional Costs	Tentative Timeline Start
	3- Part-time Firefighters	\$246,318	May, 2026
	1 - Supervisor	\$99,211	May, 2026
Weekend Staffing 7 pm to 7 am, Saturday - Sunday			
	3- Part-time Firefighters	\$98,527	May, 2026
	1 - Supervisor	\$39,685	May, 2026
	Phase 2 Total Additional Operating Cost	\$483,741	
	TOTAL ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL COST PER YEAR (In 2025)	\$786,164	
Minus Cost Note:	50% Reduction in current fire staff hours do to Hybrid Staffing Change	<i>\$137,000</i>	
	4 firefighters currently train on Saturday morning.	<i>\$21,000</i>	
Additional items:	12 Sets of New Personnel Turnout Gear	\$90,000	
	Total Annual Ph 1 & 2 Personnel & Turnout Gear Costs	\$718,164	

All Operating costs are based on 2025 pay rates.

The Response times for 7 pm to 7 am on weekdays and weekends will meet the standard response times.

- **Weeknight Staffing (Monday-Friday):** 3 part-time firefighters and 1 supervisor.
- **Weekend Staffing (Saturday-Sunday):** 3 part-time firefighters and 1 supervisor.

Recommendations:

Based on the analysis presented above, the Subcommittee and Administration recommend the City Council approve the proposed staffing model and authorize the necessary facility renovations as discussed. This phased approach will enable us to enhance our Fire & EMS services, ensuring timely and effective response to emergencies, while also remaining fiscally responsible.

If authorized, the staff will begin the interview process of applicants, draft rules and policies for the hybrid model, and begin the RFP process for bidding. Any required Council approvals on these steps will be presented to City Council in the future.