

Final Report
Of the
Amherst Fire Department
Re-Organization Study Committee

November 2003

Introduction

This document contains the final report of the Amherst Fire Department Re-Organization Study Committee. This Committee was charged by mutual agreement between the Town of Amherst and Amherst Fire Fighters Local 1764 with examining the possible re-structuring of the Department not only to alleviate a number of the problems related to delivery of quality emergency services but also to address duties and responsibilities of various department officers which are being inadequately completed.

There has been a significant delay in the release of this report. Scheduling problems, the necessity of research, and the extended discussions of Committee members required the postponement of our final recommendations. Without a doubt, the Committee could have continued on its present course beyond what had taken us over a year to accomplish. However, our main conclusions would remain much the same.

The Committee spent quite a bit of time attempting to define the problems within the Fire Department created by structure. We began by examining the basic functions of a fire department. In an attempt not to “re-invent the wheel,” research was required as we compared and contrasted our organization to similar departments. We slowly focused our attention to the problems we had defined, using previous recommendations by the Fire Chief as a starting point. Each Committee member presented his and her own suggestions for re-structuring. There were many long and fervent discussions as we honed these ideas into the framework of “positions.” We did not always agree. But eventually, we were able to generate job descriptions of each proposed position in order to better understand the final plan. And so, what we present here is truly a consensus of the Committee.

The consideration of this document has caused a bit of consternation within the Department. Many rumors have developed concerning the Committee’s activities. We trust that this final document will assuage those worries and demonstrate our pragmatic deliberation as a group.

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to extend its gratitude to Fire Chief Hoyle for his cooperation during the development of this report. As our work went through a seemingly endless series of revisions, Chief Hoyle volunteered to draft many of those amendments. He contributed many hours in research on his own initiative and also at the request of the Committee. We would also like to thank President Lee Gianetti of the Amherst Fire Fighters Local 1764 for meeting with us several times at critical junctures and for his continued interest and enthusiastic support of our deliberations. And we sincerely appreciate Town Manager Barry Del Castilho taking the time to meet with us on one occasion as we sought clarification and definition to our charge.

Chief Keith Hoyle
Assistant Fire Chief Lindsay Stromgren
Captain Timothy Masloski
Firefighter Jennifer Sell
Firefighter David Martell
Firefighter Michael Roy (resigned)
Firefighter Joshua Shanley (appointed replacement)

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Current Collective Bargaining Agreement, July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2004,
Between the Town of Amherst and Amherst Fire Fighters , Local 1764, IAFF

Article 34
Reorganization Study Committee

34.1 The Town and the Union agree to establish a study committee to evaluate the current table of organization of the fire department. The committee shall create a final written report containing their findings and recommendations. It shall be the goal of the committee to create a comprehensive final document. The Committee shall use the Fire Chief's reorganization proposal as a starting point.

The Committee shall consist of the Fire Chief and 5 members appointed by the Union. The Union appointed members shall contain one assistant chief, one captain and three fire fighters. All committee members shall have equal voting status.

The Committee will meet at a minimum of once a month with the agenda for each meeting determined by a majority of the committee at least three days prior to the meeting. Minutes shall be kept for each meeting. The committee at the next scheduled meeting shall approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Approval of the final report shall be a majority of ALL committee members.

The final committee report, due by June 30, 2003, shall be forwarded to the Town Manager , the Union Negotiations Committee and the Union Membership. The Committee may extend the deadline for the report by a majority vote, if the Committee determines the need for additional time to complete the final document.

The Town shall provide support to the committee members in terms of detail time for official committee business, subject to the approval of the Fire Chief.

Background

The Amherst Fire Department has the smallest career force of any community within the Commonwealth in the 28,000-40,000 population range, yet is one of the busiest. Our ratio of 117.35 calls per firefighter per year is the highest in the state, and our 1.11 firefighters per thousand population is the lowest. We have 7 on-duty personnel minimum — again the lowest in the state for our population range. Since the year this staffing level was re-established (1992), the number of emergency calls has increased 34%! [Staffing was at 7 minimum until 1976 when it dropped to 6]. Approximately 46% of the time that one ambulance is engaged on an emergency, a 2nd one will be called out. 20% of the time a 3rd ambulance responds to another call and the on-duty force is depleted. The only reason we are able to function as well as we do with regards to emergency response is that we have call and volunteer firefighters augmenting the career force. The fact that we have not encountered a major fire while our on-duty force has been engaged with EMS activity is pure luck! Our emergency response numbers continue to increase at a rate of 5% annually. Another price we pay for the low number of career firefighters is reflected in our high injury statistics.

Interestingly, the New England Insurance Rating Association (a fire insurance rating bureau that sets all property insurance rates in each municipality) back in 1965 stated that Amherst should have 15 personnel on duty based upon the hazard index, population and activity levels observed. A Town committee established in 1964 (Fire Protection Needs Committee) agreed with many of the conclusions of the Fire Grading Report in their final report in December, 1966. Yet, in 2003, we have less than half that staffing on duty, are 5 times as busy in terms of emergency responses alone, and note that most of the communities in our population range indeed have the 15 personnel on-duty now as recommended for us in 1965!

However, *simply increasing the number of on-duty personnel alone will not solve our problems*. As we will point out, the basic structure of our Department does not allow for proper managerial function.

During the first few meetings of the Committee, we agreed to “step back” from the table, so to speak, and examine the larger picture. Exactly what is a fire department responsible to do, we wondered? How is Amherst Fire Department meeting or failing to meet those responsibilities? Over these first few weeks, Committee members contacted 13 other fire departments, generally similar to Amherst by population (although none of these Departments have 3 forces as we do) and surveyed the respondents regarding the management structure of their departments. In virtually every case, the departments with more than one station have a single officer supervising the entire shift. [The full results of this survey are presented in Appendices III and IV].

The Committee also scrutinized the activities and duties being presently conducted by Amherst Fire Department personnel. Deficiencies are presented throughout the body of this report.

Organizational Structure

The current structure of the Fire Department is presented in the flowchart in Appendix I at the end of this report; this structure was adopted in 1985, nearly 20 years ago. The Department consists of three firefighting forces: the Permanent Force, the Call Force and the Student Force. Although each force has its own command structure, the career permanent force officers and firefighters exercise full authority over all members of the Call and Student Forces at an emergency scene, regardless of their rank. Within the Permanent Force itself, there are only 4 ranks: Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain and Firefighter. Presently, there are 2 Assistant Chiefs, 8 Captains and about 30 Firefighters

The two Assistant Fire Chiefs are strictly “staff” positions, meaning that these two officers do not have duties staffing an engine company and ambulance. In fact, the Assistant Chiefs work a different schedule at 37 ½ hours a week. It is these officers who have broad management in the areas of Operations, EMS, Training and Fire Prevention. In contrast, the Captains are “line” officers; they function as “foremen,” working alongside firefighters on the engine and as part of an ambulance crew. Additionally, the Captains have “staff assignments” such as Training Assistant, EMS Assistant, SCBA Officer, Water Supply Officer, Mechanic, Protective Gear and Uniform Officer, Safety and Rescue Officer, Hose and Small Equipment Officer. The Captains may take on other projects, like the SAFE Program, TRIAD/Senior liaison, and technical rescue.

Aside from the three forces, the only other staff position in the Fire Department is one secretary.

Present Day Status

As previously mentioned, the Department last was re-organized in 1985. In that year, there were 2936 emergency responses, handled by an on-duty crew of 6. Eighteen years later, in FY 2003, there were 4792 responses, a 39% increase, handled with a minimum staffing level of 7. [A further statistical breakdown of activity is presented in Appendix II.] In 1985, we offered only basic-level ambulance service; today, a significant number of our EMS calls are for Advanced-level Life Support (ALS) provided by our paramedics. Since the early 1990’s, the steady increase in emergency traffic has not only overwhelmed the Department’s ability to perform normal management functions (i.e. to plan, organize, direct, and control) but also threatens our ability to provide those emergency services in a safe and expeditious manner. How? Let’s look at a simplified example: on a given day shift, let us assume that the primary ambulance out of Central station handles just 4 ambulance calls. The average ambulance call takes between 1½ to 2 hours to complete (assuming a normal transport to Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton). Out of this 10-hour shift, this means that the two personnel on the ambulance will be tied up for 6-8 hours! If one of the crew members is a Captain that day, little to none of his or her additional responsibilities (such as training or inspections) will be addressed. If other traffic runs *concurrently* instead of *consecutively* (as is most often the case), then even more of the on-duty crew is committed. It is this multiple emergency traffic that is crippling the ability of our 7-person crews not only to carry out non-emergent duties but also to deliver adequate emergency medical care.

Because emergency incidents are our #1 priority, and because there is often insufficient personnel to cover multiple incidents, all other activities are pushed aside or deliberately rejected. We end up completing only those tasks which are necessitated by some priority, such as minimal EMS training to maintain our accreditations. The only long-range planning within the Fire Department is presently done almost solely by the Fire Chief, as the Assistant Chiefs are mired in daily operations as mundane as vehicle maintenance and smoke detector placement in a home. This is not effective use of a chief officer’s time nor does it allow for critical planning and evaluation of Department operations and programs.

Code Enforcement, Inspections and Public Education

Although not always thought of as one of our primary functions, code enforcement and inspections by the local fire department are mandated by state law. Failure to comply with these laws leaves the Town liable not only at the time of the inspection but most likely *for the lifetime of the building*. One merely needs to look in our local newspaper regarding on-going issues and litigation with the Sunderland Elementary School building and the Greenfield Middle School to understand the consequences of

inadequate oversight both before and during construction. Both of these municipal projects have been languishing for years now with no end in sight, costing their communities thousands of dollars in legal fees and renovation costs. This past year, a fatal nightclub fire in Rhode Island (resulting in 95 deaths) cast a pall not only upon the club owners, but also upon local fire and building officials, calling into question the frequency and the adequacy of their mandated inspections.

Back in 1985, the Massachusetts State Building Code was much simpler and required very little from fire departments in terms of oversight. Fire prevention duties increased significantly in 1998 with the adoption of the 6th edition of the State Building Code. Massachusetts is about to adopt new regulations in 2003 and 2004 that will again have a major impact on mandated fire prevention duties. A new State Building Code for One and Two Family Residences, the 7th edition of the State Building Code, and the new State Fire Safety Code will become law in late 2003 and 2004. These new regulations will require even more oversight from the Fire Department.

Even without these increased responsibilities, we already are deficient in our resource allocation to fire prevention. We have one Assistant Chief reviewing construction plans¹, answering inquiries, attending pre-construction conferences, working with sprinkler contractors, meeting with owners and occupants, conducting compliance inspections with other town officials, and most importantly, conducting final inspections prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. The plans he reviews require technical knowledge of electrical systems, fire protection systems and suppressions systems (such as Ansul fire extinguishing systems for kitchens and sprinkler systems); some highly specialized systems such as those for computer center fire suppression also require approval and inspection. Along with the Planning Board, he also has to review building site plans to ensure adequate fire apparatus access and appropriate hydrant placement.

The cold hard fact is that, on many days, this Assistant Chief cannot physically leave his office to conduct inspections because contractors or engineers walk-in or phone to ask him questions about their upcoming or ongoing projects. Recently, a single apartment building erected in town took well over 60 hours of the Assistant Chief's time, over several months, much of it redundant because the engineers were not conforming to mandated State Building Code provisions.

And worse yet, we have been informed that the colleges are embarking upon a \$500 million building program. Given the present work load of the Assistant Chief, this is an impossible burden.

Aside from building code issues, there are other duties. Presently we have to issue written permits for black powder storage; open burning; fire protection systems installation and temporary discontinuance; LP and natural gas usage and storage; oil burner installation; smoke detector inspections for homes upon sale of property; tank truck inspections; tar kettle use; underground and above ground combustibles and flammable liquid storage tanks; use of torches to remove paint and roofing materials; and other less frequently used items (such as fireworks). Some of these permits require on-site inspection (such as those for smoke detectors) and are presently conducted by on-duty crews. Since these inspections are scheduled every half-hour, back-to-back, Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, virtually no other activity can take place. When an emergency call comes in, the inspection is either delayed or cancelled. Complaints from the public (i.e. realtors and building owners) about this situation are almost daily to the Fire Chief's office.

¹ Plan reviews include private residential, group homes, boarding houses, elder housing, apartment complexes, condominiums, commercial and industrial property, and educational facilities (incl. residential, academic, maintenance and office space). New construction and renovations often require the same amount of attention.

Public education has always been an important service of any local Fire Department. Despite the current activity level, many firefighters volunteer to teach our citizens fire safety and life-saving techniques. We are fortunate in Amherst to have several career staff who conduct regular fire education in the elementary schools via the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) program. Our program is recognized state-wide as both progressive and innovative. Several initiatives of our SAFE staff (regarding program evaluation and health system partnerships) are being done nowhere else in the state. Further, one of our Captains serves as a liaison with the Town's SALT program; one of our firefighters is a member of a regional coalition of psychologists, law enforcement officers and health professionals to intercede in cases of juvenile firesetting behavior. Another firefighter is a member of the regional Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) team, which offers counseling to fire and police personnel after particularly stressful incidents. And a number of our paramedics provide outreach education, teaching CPR to local groups and businesses, as well as SAED (Semi-Automatic External Defibrillator) training for first responders and the general public. Each of these volunteers is willing to expand his or her services, if the opportunity arises.

Maintenance of Infrastructure

The Fire Department has 23 vehicles of varying age and complexity, worth an estimated 2.5 million dollars. Nowadays, the reality is that an oil change and replacement of filters is not sufficient to maintain optimal operating efficiency for these vehicles. Without that efficiency, these vehicles have both increased operating costs and increased "down time" for service and repairs. Although we conduct regular preventative maintenance and inspection of the vehicles, we have no full-time mechanic to service this fleet according to manufacturers' specifications. Ambulances especially need brake and electrical work often. Even fire pumps, once a basic mechanical device that most "home garage" fire service mechanics could service, are now computerized. Still, there are a great many routine and emergency repairs that a qualified department mechanic could perform.

The two fire station facilities are aging as well. With 9 students living at the North Station and another 4 staffing Engine 3 for 13 to 24 hours per day, that station is enduring high traffic usage. Central Station, now 74 years old, is suffering from the vagaries of age and use.

Due to the sometimes exorbitant expense of maintenance costs for our vehicles and facilities, an Assistant Chief directly oversees our maintenance program. He spends an inordinate amount of his time chasing down mechanical issues that a Department mechanic/serviceperson should be used for.

Last year, the Fire Department was finally brought into the Town's computer network; we were the last department in Town to be so equipped. The entire concept of networks is foreign to us but it has already changed the way we process and record information. This is an extremely complex and challenging field of information management, affecting how we file records and permits, design reports and access data. Because we have two stations and three different forces (amounting to 100 personnel), training and logistics have been difficult obstacles to overcome. We have one Captain who has volunteered to supervise this process, but the effort requires more time than can be devoted realistically by a line officer. The police department already has a civilian in charge of MIS and records management; ultimately, additional personnel in this one field alone may have to be our solution as well.

Delivering Emergency Medical Services

The Amherst Fire Department is a premier pre-hospital EMS provider in western Massachusetts. Our reputation is hard earned. Our personnel consistently deliver high quality medical care to the citizens of Amherst, Hadley, Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury. But that quality comes at a price.

As we are all well aware, the Commonwealth has stringent requirements in the EMS field for training, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) re-certification, record-keeping, ambulance vehicle operation and supplies. Failing to meet those requirements jeopardizes certifications and licensing, both individually and as a service. One of our Assistant Chiefs and several Captains share the responsibility to supervise various aspects of EMS program delivery. However, new laws and regulations are constantly challenging our operations.

The recently implemented federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), for example, is one of the most recent changes affecting our service. This law dictates a patient's utmost privacy in the gathering and dissemination of personal medical information. It affects how we gather a patient's medical history, how it is recorded, where it is filed, who can review it or access it and even how the Town is allowed to bill for ambulance services. As we look towards computerizing our patient billing system, beginning with the EMTs in the field, we must now look to HIPAA compliance among software vendors. This law is just one of many outside forces which require us to continually review and modify our policies and procedures.

Delivering Fire Suppression Services

In the fire suppression and rescue venues, the state is not as strict yet, but legislation requiring conformance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards is close on the horizon. Even though Massachusetts does not yet mandate NFPA compliance, the courts are already recognizing NFPA and IFSTA (International Fire Service Training Association) as organizations whose consensus standards should be adhered to. We model our training after NFPA Firefighter I/II standards and use IFSTA publications in our training programs, but especially with career staff, we do not train as much as we should. Principally this is because the number of emergencies interrupts training sessions. We need a more formal training regimen with oversight by one person per shift.

We are also mandated to deliver certain highly specialized services, such as hazardous materials response and confined space/below-grade rescue. We have begun forming expert teams to deal with high angle rescue and tactical EMS response for dangerous situations. This type of training requires repetitive practice sessions, group meetings with law enforcement agencies and hands-on exercises to maintain. Given the recent violence on the University campus, it is necessary that we train to meet these situations in a pro-active manner.

We have 41 full-time employees and 59 part-time and volunteer staff that deliver the myriad of professional services described herein, but, similar to the reptile, we have the critical need to shed our existing skin. Without that ability, we cannot grow adequately to meet the changing needs of Amherst, our first response area and our world. Our career staff is trained to a higher standard both in terms of firefighting and certainly paramedical skills. However, *we have no call or volunteer personnel who can staff emergency medical services to the advanced life support level.*

Make no mistake - the Amherst Fire Department, despite limited staffing, is recognized by its peers as one of the best in the business. Our staff deserves credit for maintaining a high degree of excellence and

for providing additional services others do not. But we cannot ignore the fact that in 2003, our structure is deficient and does not allow the Department to perform even standard management functions critical to organizational survival and appropriate delivery of services to our citizens in the 21st century.

Modifying that structure so key management tasks can be accomplished, as well as emergency and non-emergency services delivered in a timely fashion, is paramount. Otherwise, organizational dysfunction, decreased morale, increased injuries and a degradation of service delivery (both emergency and business) to our citizens will be the eventual result, regardless of the skill or commitment of Amherst's firefighters.

Comparable Organizations

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, one of the early activities of the Committee was to examine the structure of other departments across the state similar to our own (Appendix III). For a moment, let us look even closer to home.

There is another department in Town which also delivers emergency services: Amherst Police Department. APD has a Police Chief, 2 Captains, 4 Lieutenants, an Information Services/Records Management professional and 3 secretaries. [In fact, very recently, a Sergeant was promoted to Lieutenant, creating a new position.] Shift personnel management is conducted by 6 Sergeants (comparable to our 8 Captains). The Police carry out management and planning functions with 8 staff officers and 3 support staff while the Fire Department attempts to do the same with 3 staff and one support person. It should be a surprise to no one that this is not working.

Our neighbor across the river, the City of Northampton, has a Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Chiefs (responsible for Fire Prevention and Operations), a Deputy Chief supervising each shift (4), a Training Captain, an administrative assistant for grants and Information Technology and a secretary. Northampton Fire has no ambulance service.

Funding

The Committee feels it would be remiss not to address the important consideration of funding. A department with twice the personnel we currently have would almost certainly be able to handle the volume of calls we now cover. However, that wouldn't be a fiscally prudent recommendation. By the same token, the Town is ill-served by continuing to fund the Fire Department to maintain personnel numbers at the current level. An increase is necessary and funding must be found.

We realize that, in these fiscally challenging times, to increase personnel in any department will be a difficult recommendation to tender. But, it is a critical need in order to staff the Fire Department to meet its public safety responsibilities *immediately*, and to position it to meet the ever-changing world of the future. At this place in time, we believe the choice *not* to re-organize the Fire Department will undoubtedly lead to tragedy, tragedy that could have been prevented with adequate resources provided.

We are not advocating doubling the size of our on-duty force, although many of our peer departments, in fact, are double our size. We do recommend responsible increases in on-duty and staff positions to better enable the Fire Department to accomplish its mission.

Currently, the vast majority of personnel funding comes through the tax base. While this is most often a more secure funding method, it is also an ever-increasing burden on the taxpayer. We suggest that other funding methods be explored, such as federal programs or grant options to hire more firefighters similar

to the recent police officer hiring programs of recent years. We suggest that the colleges should assume a more direct fiscal role, befitting their positions as a “power-users” of local emergency services. We advocate the use of receipts from inspections and permits to supplement the funding of the respective positions that generate those receipts. We also suggest additional use of the Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation account. Since the Fire Department does in fact generate significant capital via ambulance receipts, those same receipts can be a source for hiring additional personnel.

Recommendations

In summary, by the end of FY09, we recommend and prioritize the following:

1. minimum staffing on each shift goes to nine (9) by the end of FY05.
2. four (4) new Division Chief *positions* be created and four existing Captains be promoted.
3. an existing firefighter/EMT position be re-assigned to fire prevention and inspection duties.
4. a firefighter/EMT/mechanic position be created.
5. a clerical position be created.
6. four (4) new firefighter/EMT are hired.
7. minimum staffing on each shift go to ten (10) with the acquisition of the new personnel above.
8. a staff Division Chief position be created.
9. retain a professional firm to independently study the Fire Department organization.

In the coming section, we will speak to each recommendation, as the Committee considered it.

1. minimum staffing on each shift goes to nine (9) by the end of FY05.

Although many have felt that our first recommendation should be to hire additional personnel, we feel that we can solve many problems by changing policy rather than hiring.

Most of the 4 tours (shifts) already have 9 personnel; however, our minimum staffing is 7. The result is that 2 people per shift can take time off and no hiring is necessary. This also means that a fair amount of the time, only 7 people are on duty, especially on weekends. *Bringing the minimum staffing level up to 9 at all times does not require the hiring of additional personnel.* It does however an increase overtime hiring to keep staffing at 9. Without any doubt, this one change would have a significant impact upon on duty response.

Let us be clear in the importance of this recommendation: *until there are a minimum of 9 personnel on duty, the Town should not consider any of the other re-organizational recommendations to follow.* However, in such a situation, our final recommendation would become even more important.

2. four (4) new Division Chief positions be created and four existing Captains be promoted.

We recommend the creation of a new supervisory level, namely that of a “Division Chief.” The purpose of the Division Chief is to provide for a singular officer to oversee the day-to-day shift responsibilities.

Since the construction of the North Fire Station in 1974, the Town of Amherst has been divided into two geographic response areas: North Station handles all calls north of Strong Street; Central handles

all calls to the south. In the current organizational system, there are two line officers² on duty at any given time, one at Central Station supervising a crew of 3-4 firefighters [District 1] and one at North Station supervising 2-3 firefighters [District 2]. These two officers are set almost in opposition to one another, each trying to carry out his or her own routine duties amidst ongoing emergency activity and with a limited number of subordinates. Being of exactly the same rank, neither Captain has the authority to dictate the activities of the other Captain's crew (except in temporary circumstances, such as when the other Captain is serving on an ambulance call). It is important to mention at this point that the two Assistant Fire Chiefs have never been charged with responsibility for overseeing the on-duty crews. That managerial function lies solely with the two Captains.

This situation leads to a myriad of problems: one crew can be underutilized while the other is overwhelmed by a steady series of emergency calls; emergency activity in one District may prevent one crew's scheduled training from taking place while the crew in the other station sits dormant; inspections (normally scheduled by district) are delayed or even cancelled. Similar problems abound. The situation is grossly exacerbated by personality conflicts between the two officers, each with different priorities.

The problem can be even more complex if the officer is temporarily unavailable for decision-making. Quite often, the shift officer will be committed to ambulance activity as a member of a two-person crew, each call being on average 1½ - 2 hours. In these cases, the senior firefighter left behind acts as the officer in charge until the shift officer's return. Some firefighters do extremely well in this role as a "temporary" officer; many do not.

In the frequent case whereby all on-duty personnel are committed to emergency activity, there is literally NO ONE left to oversee incoming relief crews (in the form of Call and Student Force members) or to provide continuity of supervision. Presently, if available, one of the 3 chief officers will temporarily step into this role.³ However, that chief officer will most likely be unaware of the current state of affairs and the status of committed resources. In the event of multiple emergency incidents, precious time is lost and available resources may be committed in error. During these periods, even commonplace events, such as a firefighter calling in sick for the on-coming shift, can be missed.

During our research and discussions as a committee, we examined a variety of options. One possibility we reviewed involved creating a new position of "Lieutenant." This subordinate officer would take command of a company at one station, leaving the senior officer (the Captain) in overall charge. However, this option is constrained by the current organizational structure. We presently have 8 Captains. In order to implement the plan, either 4 Captains would have to accept demotion or the plan must be shelved until 4 of the Captains quit, are injured or retire. Obviously, this is not a short-term solution.

Our consensus recommendation is in agreement with the original suggestion of the Fire Chief. In creating a Division Chief⁴ who acts as a shift supervisor, a number of issues are settled at once. The authority of this chief officer over the two sometimes-competing Captains is demonstrated by rank alone. He or she would directly supervise the firefighting force through these two company officers.

² The terms "Captain" and "Officer" are used interchangeably. But in truth, a firefighter may serve as an Acting Officer for a shift or even longer, in the absence of a Captain.

³ Over night, one of the chief officers may actually be required to come back in to supervise the Call Force or Student Force.

⁴ There would actually be 4 Division Chiefs in all, each acting as a supervisor for one of the four tours.

Disputes or disagreements of policy or circumstances would be handled summarily by a single supervisor. The Division Chief would have full authority to alter, combine or re-combine the on-duty staff as he or she sees fit to address operational needs. Work can be re-assigned from overworked crews to under-utilized crews as indicated upon order of this one individual. A Division Chief on each shift would also “free up” the two Captains from more mundane duties, allowing them to return more regularly to ambulance duty. This alone could help to distribute emergency response activity more evenly amongst shift members.

In the event the Call Force or the Student Force is called in to cover the Town, as during multiple emergency activity, the Division Chief not only provides the direct supervision of a permanent force officer, he or she also has first-hand knowledge of the circumstances leading to the call for additional personnel. For these reasons, it is our recommendation that this officer have no responsibilities for ambulance duty. And due to this officer’s indispensable position providing continuity of leadership, we further strongly recommend that the Division Chief must remain within the borders of the Town during his or her regular assigned shift.

The Committee has also touched upon the subject of hiring for shift coverage. Presently, this daily duty is assigned to the North Station officer. The officer assesses the need to hire for the next week and makes phone calls to off-duty personnel. Unfortunately, those calls may end up being placed to answering machines, a spouse or a roommate. When a return call is placed (sometimes hours later), there may easily be no one in quarters to receive that call. Hiring is thereby delayed and the delays can lead to errors; grievances due to the hiring process are legion. To alleviate these difficulties, the suggestion has been made that the Division Chief take on the duty of hiring, thereby freeing the Captains of this burdensome and labor-intensive activity.

The subject of hiring is a complex one, involving intricate procedures and both fluid and rigid policies. The subject is too complex to be settled within the scope of this Committee’s work. And, ultimately, the Committee acknowledges this re-assignment of the hiring function may still prove inadequate.

In summary, the Division Chief concept appears to solve a great many of the problems inherent in the current organizational structure. Day-to-day shift supervision would be the responsibility of a single, omnipresent chief officer. This officer would directly supervise all 3 of the firefighting forces within the Fire Department, requiring no other changes to the existing organizational structure. Problems involving personnel, apparatus or equipment can be addressed immediately by a chief officer; broad planning and policy design would remain in the hands of the Fire Chief and the two Assistant Chiefs. The addition of this one position offers the greatest benefit in the most cost effective manner.

3. an existing firefighter/EMT position be re-assigned to fire prevention and inspection duties.

As mentioned previously in detail, the present situation regarding fire inspection, code enforcement and plans review is grossly inadequate. It is simply impossible for one Assistant Fire Chief to meet all the mandated requirements for this vital job. Minimally, we should add that we currently have no provisions to cover this responsibility when this officer takes time off. Contractually, he is entitled to take several weeks off at a time if he should choose to do so; but there is literally no one who understands the complexity of his work to fill his shoes in such a case. If he were to take ill , resign or retire, the consequences to the Town are enormous.

We therefore recommend that a firefighter position be re-assigned to this important staff function, to work in conjunction with the Assistant Chief. This individual would have to be trained to meet the

technical requirements of inspection duties and would be available to conduct on-going project evaluation, both with and without the presence of the Assistant Chief. The person fulfilling this staff position would have no EMS or on-duty firefighting duties but would be available for other assignments during structure fires and other large-scale commitment of resources. It has been suggested that this firefighter may be assigned Safety Officer duties at fire scenes; his or her intimate knowledge of building construction would undoubtedly be an asset in such cases.

The Committee has considered the hours this individual might work, as well as whether or not the firefighter might be available for overtime by filling in a shift during his or her off-time. Ultimately, the Committee recognizes that this type of detail must be worked out in agreement through the collective bargaining process.

Every day that we continue to operate without additional help with fire prevention duties is another day of undetected liability for the Town of Amherst.

4. a firefighter/EMT/mechanic position be created.

We have mentioned above that there are many preventive maintenance and routine maintenance duties that should be done by a technically-educated mechanic. Servicing a fire truck, a ladder truck or even an ambulance should not be left to a normal large-vehicle service person. For example, there was a case in a neighbor department in which a local certified truck mechanic was allowed to “drop” a transmission pan to change the fluid and evaluate the possibility of an overheated transmission. No problem was found, the pan was replaced and the transmission fluid was added. At a drill that next week, the firefighting crew discovered that the pump would not go into gear, rendering the truck all but useless. A pump mechanic was called in but he could not find the problem. After spending considerable time eliminating possible causes, he noticed that the transmission pan had a fairly fresh gasket. He dropped the pan again for himself and found that the truck mechanic, through ignorance about fire pump operation, had pinched a sensing tube that enters the transmission pan. This tube allows the truck’s transmission to switch from “road” service to “pump” service. Although potentially harmful to the truck, its early discovery only meant hundreds instead of thousands of dollars in repairs.

Given the complexity and technical aspects of today’s fire apparatus, as well as our ever-increasing fleet, a dedicated mechanic is well warranted.

5. a clerical position be created.

We have one departmental secretary. She answers phones, accepts payment and issues permits, answers all inquiries from the public. She handles all departmental bills and invoices. Previously, she was also expected to handle ambulance billing; now, 2 Town Hall staff (and sometime 3) carry out this same function. When she is not at work, the Fire Chief or one of the Assistant Chiefs has to answer the phones. Obviously, this is not the case at the Police Department. Although she does file quite a few reports, she is not able to spend time generating reports or carrying out other secretarial duties. In fact, if someone comes in looking for evidence of an oil tank removal, for instance (a common bank request prior to the issuance of a mortgage), that person is pointed to a filing cabinet to research the files himself.

As we look to computerizing billing for ambulance services within the next year, quite a bit of time and energy is going to be saved...but since she is no longer responsible for that function, there is no direct benefit to the Department in this area.

She is also not available for training in the new computer software that is constantly being added by the Information Technology Department. Programs such as Sweetsoft Reporting, Microsoft Access and Crystal Reports are giving us modern information management tools previously unavailable. A position as a Departmental Secretary/Information Specialist would be a perfect marriage of these two responsibilities.

- 6. four (4) new firefighter/EMT are hired.**
- 7. minimum staffing on each shift go to ten (10) with the acquisition of the new personnel above.**

It is our sixth recommendation that 4 new firefighter positions be added. Obviously, the Town has not kept up with the ever-increasing activity of the Department; this problem has been years in the making and should come as no surprise. It is currently not possible for the line officers to keep up with their responsibilities for inspection, training and supervision. Without additional personnel, the quality of our current EMS delivery and firefighting operations continue to degrade. It is only a matter of time until a tragedy occurs.

Our seventh recommendation is coupled to the sixth: namely, that when more personnel are hired, that number should be directly reflected by an increase in the minimum number of personnel on duty.

Lack of personnel has undoubtedly been a significant source for our problems regarding personnel retention, adequate basic training, on-the-job injury, increased sick leave use, and personal stress. Without intervention, these problems grow and fester. Department personnel cannot be expected to deliver quality service with limited staff while activity and expectations increase annually.

- 8. staff Division Chief position be created.**

One of our final recommendations is the creation of a staff position for Division Chief. We suggest that this chief officer be assigned responsibility for training and information management. It may also be possible for this person to oversee EMS operations and purchasing. As the Assistant Chiefs are able to devote more and more of their time to programmatic design and policy considerations, it would benefit the Town to have a chief officer to handle day-to-day issues that cross multiple shifts, such as basic firefighting training.

- 9. retain a professional firm to independently study the Fire Department organization.**

Our final recommendation is that the Town hire a professional consulting firm to comprehensively examine the operation of the Fire Department. It has been our shared experience that attempting to adequately organize a fire department is similar to trying to understand the intricacy of a subject such as economics, namely, that adjusting one element of an economic formula can drastically affect other factors. Economies are influenced dramatically by even simple stimulus; so too are fire departments. Even small changes in numbers of personnel and escalating activity, for example, can grossly affect the ability of emergency crews to do their jobs. While we have tried to accomplish the charge issued to our Committee, we have agreed that there are many factors over which we have no control...or perhaps even a *knowledge* of. We simply don't know what we don't know. An independent look is required.

The last time the Fire Department was formally studied was in 1966. Some of the recommendations of that report (such as the recommendation supporting the building of a new fire station in North Amherst) were accepted; others (such as the incremental hiring of additional personnel) were not. In

any case, the factors that influenced that final report are no longer relevant. The Town needs to consult with someone who is not only familiar with the many intangibles of emergency service operation but also with other factors, such as current organizational theory, staffing studies, personnel management and funding options.

For the benefit of the reader, a draft organizational chart is presented in Appendix V that incorporates the changes proposed above.

Proposed Job Descriptions

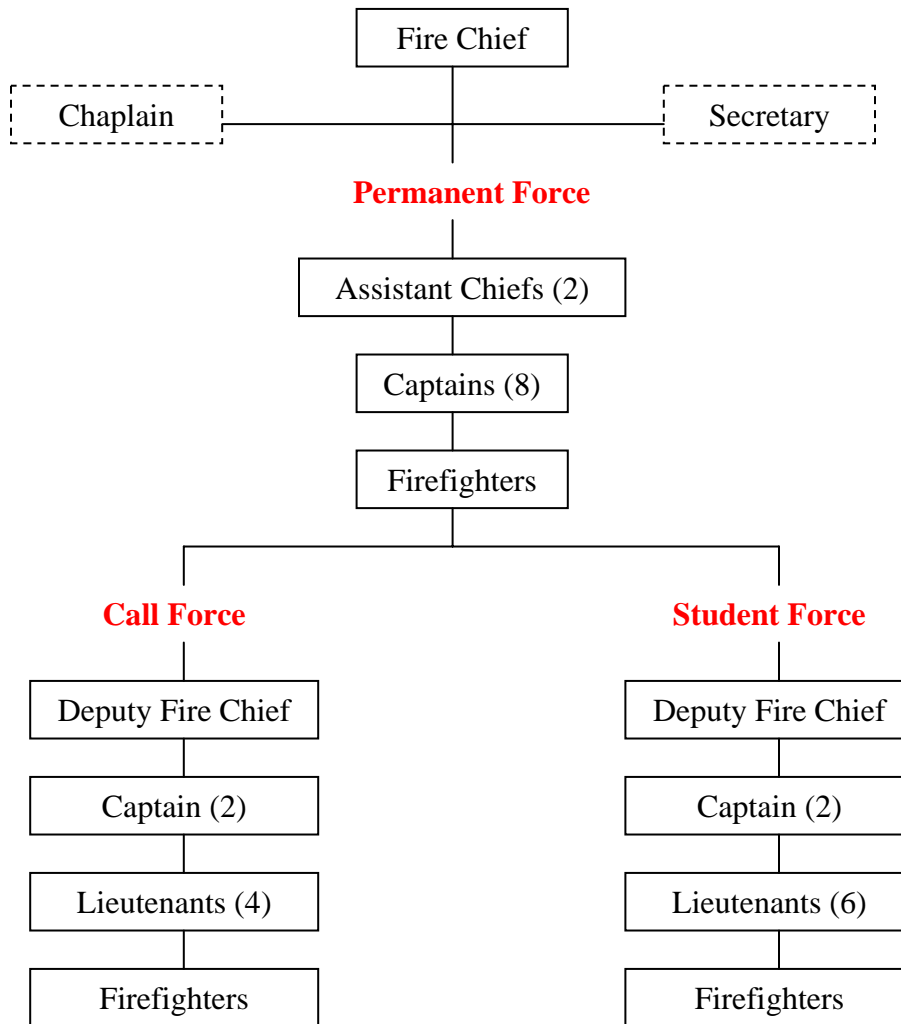
Quite often, the Committee wrangled over the actual job requirements of each position recommended in this report. In order to reach consensus, and in order that our intent not be misinterpreted later, we created job descriptions for each position (i.e. Assistant Fire Chief, Division Fire Chief, Fire Captain, Fire Inspector). The format of the descriptions follows the current format used by the Town in the posting of job openings. It is by careful reading of these detailed summaries that our recommendations for these individual positions may perhaps be most clearly understood. The reader will find the job descriptions beginning in Appendix VI at the end of this report.

Conclusion

The Committee discussed presenting the Town and the Union with a plan for re-organization accomplished in stages, rather than by priority. We agreed not to do this. The reason is simple. We would not like to suggest, for example, that the Town and the Union perhaps accept the first two stages of a four or five stage program, only to cast aside the rest of our recommendations due to fiscal or other difficulties. Rather, we laid out our recommendations based upon our understanding of the current economic state of affairs, the problems within our organization and the consensus of our Committee. It is our goal that the Town and the members of the bargaining unit of Amherst Fire Fighters Local 1764 accept this *entire* report.

Even if this plan, as presented, is adopted 100% by the end of FY09, we believe that the Town must be prepared to add even more resources to the Fire Department at the start of the next decade. If the present growth in our emergency responses, preventative health care services, and fire code enforcement continues, the structure and staffing additions we propose now will be overwhelmed in the next decade even as we are overwhelmed today.

Appendix I - Organization of the Amherst Fire Department



Appendix II - Fire Department Activity Statistics

FY 2003-2001	FY 2003	FY 2002	FY 2001
EMS Responses	3500	3361	3067
Fire Responses	1292	1333	1426
Emergency Totals	4792	4694	4493
Fire Prevention	2005	1911	1503
Fire Loss	\$895,000	\$438,350	\$342,285

FY 2000-1996	FY 2000	FY 1999	FY 1998	FY 1997	FY 1996	5 YEAR % CHANGE
EMS Responses	3055	2983	2627	2436	2463	19.4%
Fire Responses	1198	1099	984	1063	1155	3.6%
Emergency Totals	4253	4082	3611	3499	3618	14.9%
Fire Prevention	1503	1397	1942	2278	2189	-31.3%
Fire Loss	\$423,800	\$439,715	\$378,723	\$289,537	\$546,375	N/A

FY 1995-1991	FY 1995	FY 1994	FY 1993	FY 1992	FY 1991	5 YEAR % CHANGE
EMS Responses	2334	2286	1917	1800	1870	19.9%
Fire Responses	1059	1060	1074	1028	1003	5.3%
Emergency Totals	3393	3346	2991	2828	2873	44.8%
Fire Prevention	2158	2140	1896	5394	1503	30.4%
Fire Loss	\$338,645	\$429,780	\$336,095	\$112,490	\$1,149,745	N/A

FY 1990-1986	FY 1990	FY 1989	FY 1988	FY 1987	FY 1986	5 YEAR % CHANGE
EMS Responses	1491	1711	1754	1605	1541	-3.4%
Fire Responses	934	1048	1137	1144	1198	-28.3%
Emergency Totals	2425	2759	2891	2749	2739	-13.0%
Fire Prevention	1684	2745	3239	3115	3219	-47.7%
Fire Loss	+\$1,200,000	\$465,957	\$1,038,780	\$279,105	\$655,128	N/A

FY 1985-1981	FY 1985	FY 1984	FY 1983	FY 1982	FY 1981	5 YEAR % CHANGE
EMS Responses	1443	1376	1331	1280	1560	-8.1%
Fire Responses	1493	1055	941	915	1122	24.9%
Emergency Totals	2936	2431	2272	2195	2682	8.7%
Fire Prevention	1745	1757	1557	1327	2143	-22.8%
Fire Loss	\$1,972,016	\$403,794	\$99,040	\$103,155	\$250,000	N/A

FY 1980-1976	FY 1980	FY 1979	FY 1978	FY 1977	FY 1976	5 YEAR % CHANGE
EMS Responses	1373	1401	556	727	624	54.5%
Fire Responses	845	809	1327	1467	1232	-31.0%
Emergency Totals	2218	2210	1883	2194	1856	16.3%
Fire Prevention	1510	1684	2420	1320	944	37.5%
Fire Loss	\$125,000	\$158,500	\$283,100	\$336,800	\$68,700	N/A

Appendix III – Departmental Survey of Peer Fire Departments

<u>AGAWAM</u>	<u>AMHERST</u>	<u>ATTLEBORO</u>	<u>BRAINTREE</u>
2 STATIONS ADMIN DC 2 LTs (SC) 11 FFs FIRE PREV - INSPECTOR EMS - line LT TRAINING - LT.	2 STATIONS 2 ADMIN ACs 2 CAPTAINS (SC) 5 FFs FIRE PREV - ADMIN AC EMS - ADMIN AC & 2 line CAPTS TRAINING - ADMIN AC	4 STATIONS 4 DCs (1 per shift) 3 CAPTAINS (SC) 18 FFs FIRE PREV - CAPTAIN EMS - line CAPTAIN TRAINING - line CAPT.	3 STATIONS 7 DCs (1 per shift) 1 CAPT (HDQTRS. SC) 4 LTs (2 are SC: 2 at HDQT) 13 FFs FIRE PREV - DC, LT & HAZMAT DC EMS - line CAPTAIN TRAINING- line CAPTAIN 2900 Fire & 2900 EMS
1825 Fire & 2050 EMS	1292 Fire & 3500 EMS	1500 Fire & 4500 EMS	
<u>FALMOUTH</u>	<u>FRANKLIN</u>	<u>LEXINGTON</u>	<u>NATICK</u>
5 STATIONS 2 DCs 4 day wk rotating CAPT. (acts as BC) LT (HDQTRS SC) 10 FFs FIRE PREV - FPO & INSP. EMS - FF/EMT-P TRAINING - line CAPT. 1100 Fire & 3500 EMS	2 STATIONS ADMIN DC CAPTAIN (HDQTRS) LT (STA 2) 8 FFs FIRE PREV - CAPTAIN EMS - line EMT-P and "B" TRAINING - line CAPT. 1507 Fire & 2263 EMS	2 STATIONS ADMIN AC CAPTAIN (acts as BC) 2 LTs (SC) 8 FFs FIRE PREV - AC EMS - 3 line FFs TRAINING - line CAPTS 1400 Fire & 2200 EMS	4 STATIONS 5 DCs (1 per shift) 1 OR 2 CAPTS 4 LTs 10 FFs FIRE PREV - CAPT & FF EMS - DC TRAINING - line CAPTS 2000 Fire & 3000 EMS
<u>NEEDHAM</u>	<u>RANDOLPH</u>	<u>STOUGHTON</u>	<u>WESTFIELD</u>
2 STATIONS ADMIN DC 4 DCs (1 per shift) 1 CAPTAIN 1 LT 10 FFs FIRE PREV - 2 INSP. EMS - line DC TRAINING - line DC 1200 Fire & 2300 EMS	2 STATIONS 4 DCs (1 per shift) CAPTAIN - HDQTRS LT in STATION 2 7 FFs FIRE PREV - CAPTAIN EMS - line FF/EMT-P TRAINING - line CAPTS 1500 Fire & 2500 EMS	2 STATIONS 2 ADMIN DCs CAPTAIN (acts as BC) 2 LTs 6 FFs FIRE PREV - LT EMS - line LT & FF TRAINING - CAPTAIN 1750 Fire & 2850 EMS	3 STATIONS 5 DCs (1 per shift) 2 CAPTAINS (SC) 16 FFs (1 STA.-NO Officer) FIRE PREV - DC EMS - line DC & LT TRAINING - CAPTAIN 3000 Fire & 5000 EMS
<u>WEST SPRINGFIELD</u>			
3 STATIONS 5 DCs (1 per shift) 3 LTs 10 FFs FIRE PREV - DC EMS - line DC & LT TRAINING - line LTs 1100 Fire & 3600 EMS			

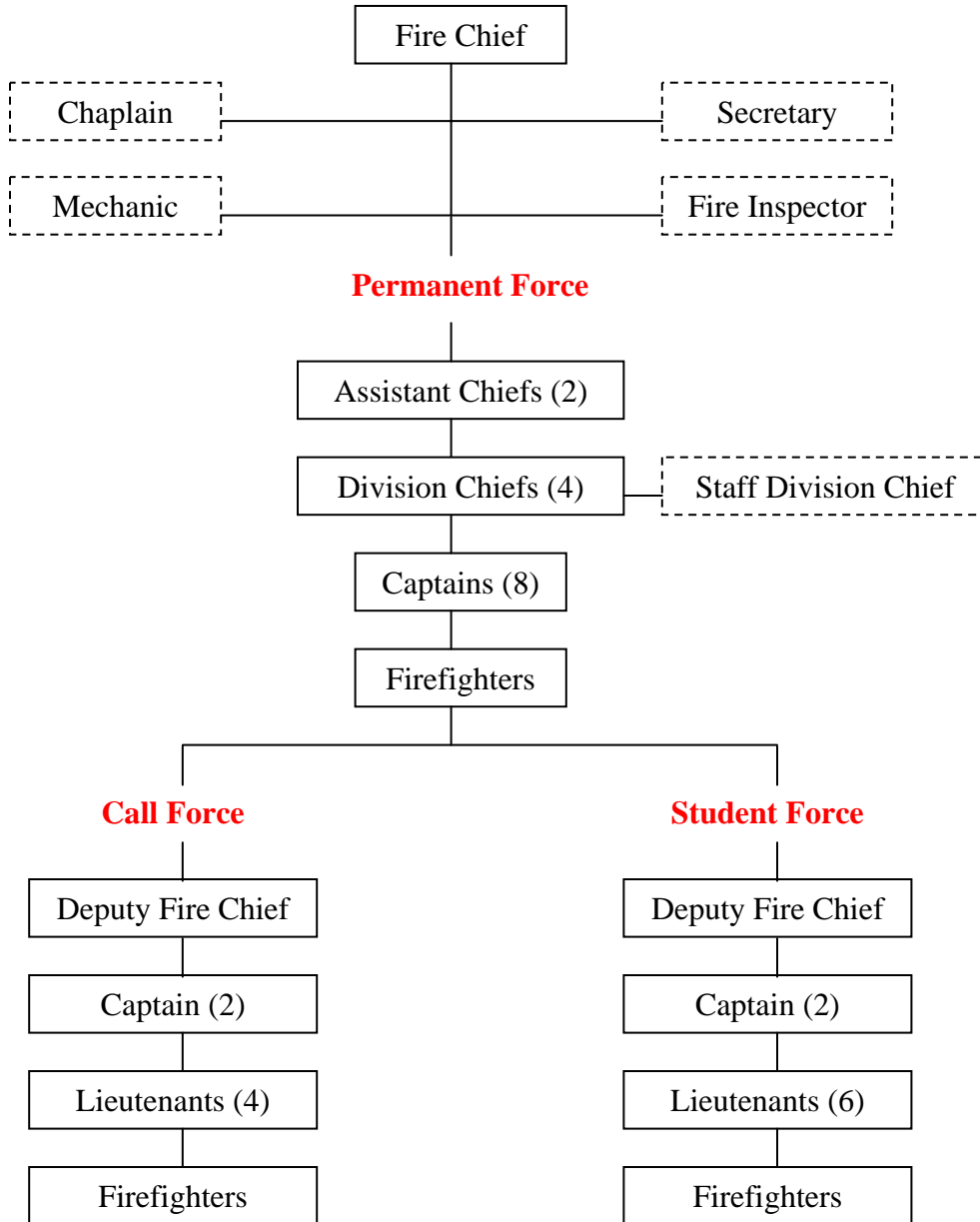
LEGEND

AC = Assistant Chief
DC = Deputy Chief
BC = Battalion Chief
SC = Shift Commander, like a DC or BC
CAPT = Captain
LT = Lieutenant
FF = Firefighter
INSP = Fire Inspector
line = member working a shift as an officer or firefighter
ADMIN = Administrative staff - not working "on the line"

**Appendix IV – Firefighters Per Thousand, Massachusetts Communities
28,000 to 40,000 Population**

City	Population	FF per 1000 Pop.	FF Total	Minimum on duty
1. Gloucester	40,000	2.15	86 career	20
2. Salem	37,500	2.53	95 career	22
3. Methuen	37,000	2.60	96 career	20
4. Billerica	37,000	1.97	73 career	17
5. Westfield	36,500	2.66	97 career	19
6. Plymouth	36,500	3.36	121 career	31
7. Amherst	36,000	1.11	40 career 22 call 36 students	7
8. Beverly	35,500	2.14	76 career	18
9. Braintree	35,000	2.53	89 career	17
10. Attleboro	35,000	2.86	100 career	22
11. Leominster	35,000	2.41	81 career	17
12. Marlborough	34,000	2.25	73 career 2 call	19
13. Woburn	34,000	2.11	72 career	16
14. Everett	32,000	3.40	105 career	23
15. Watertown	32,000	2.72	87 career	18
16. Agawam	32,000	1.84	59 career 10 call	11
17. Chelmsford	31,500	1.90	60 career	14
18. Franklin	31,500	1.48	46 career	9
19. Northampton	30,500	1.90	58 career	10
20. Norwood	30,000	2.12	63 career	14
21. Andover	29,500	2.10	62 career	15
22. Natick	29,500	2.79	82 career	16
23. Stoughton	29,000	1.90	57 career	12
24. Lexington	29,000	1.79	52 career	12
25. West Springfield	29,000	2.43	70 career	14
26. Randolph	28,500	1.87	56 career	11
27. Melrose	28,000	2.47	70 career	13
28. Needham	28,000	2.44	68 career	15
29. Falmouth	28,000	2.11	59 career 60 call	13

Appendix V – Proposed Re-Organization (at final step)



Appendix VI-A – Assistant Fire Chief Job Description

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Level: F3
Fire Department
Assistant Chief

Job Summary

Performs varied duties in directing activities involving operations, training, administration, fire prevention, and emergency medical services of the department. Serves as operations officer, assuming direct command of all firefighting activity until relieved by Fire Chief; serves as Acting Fire Chief during the absence and/or incapacity of the Fire Chief.

Supervision Received

Performs duties under the broad supervision of the Fire Chief. Performs duties on own initiative, using considerable judgment regarding correct course of action. When in command at fire scene, may be called upon to make crucial decisions affecting the personal safety of subordinates and citizens.

Supervision Exercised

Provides broad supervision of Division Chiefs and all employees of the Department; assists the Fire Chief in the administration of Fire Department activities and acts as Fire Chief during absence of the Fire Chief.

Major Duties

1. Administers fire prevention, education, and public relations programs, including the development and implementation of the programs. Performs and/or oversees the inspections of all buildings and facilities within the campuses and Town according to established laws and regulations. Responsible for issuance of Chapter 148 and other applicable permits, review of fire protection and prevention plans, and responds to possible fire code violations reported by other Town Inspectors. Reviews reported code violations, inspection records, and permits granted by other personnel.
2. Plans and directs training programs including all administrative duties associated with the maintaining training records. Provides technical and administrative supervision of all phases of firefighting and related work, including operations and maintenance of equipment. Assures that all subordinates who are directly engaged in firefighting are adequately trained. Supervises Call and Student Force training, operations and hiring procedures.
3. Administers the Emergency Medical Services Program. Plans and oversees all aspects the Emergency Medical Services operations within the Fire Department including but not limited to the coordination of training of personnel, records of personnel's progress toward recertifications, policies and procedure manual formation and updating, regional protocols, review of all ambulance reports, and statistical record keeping.
4. As Operations Officer, responds to all box alarms and working fires. Takes command at scene of a fire and supervises fire personnel; delegates duties as operation progresses. Determines and executes specific firefighting plan according to nature of fire, weather conditions, type of building, etc. Serves as second in command and direct aid to the Chief on his/her arrival.
5. Responsible for all departmental records concerning fire related responses; utilizing fire run reports, dispatch reports, and yearly statistical reports.
6. Directs maintenance of stations and vehicles. Includes equipment and grounds, minor repairs to the stations, firefighting equipment and vehicles, all emergency medical attendant equipment and vehicles. Delegates individual maintenance duties to subordinates. Makes recommendations relative to purchase of supplies and equipment.
7. Performs other duties as assigned.

Desired Minimum Qualifications

Bachelor's in fire science, emergency medical, or closely related field, and two (2) years of experience as a career Fire Captain in Amherst or an Associates' degree in fire science, emergency medical or closely related field and five (5) years experience as a career Fire Captain in Amherst.

Extensive knowledge of modern fire suppression and prevention and emergency medical services principles, procedures, techniques, and equipment; extensive knowledge of first aid and resuscitation techniques and their application as demonstrated through State E.M.T Certification. Considerable knowledge of applicable laws, ordinances, departmental standard operating procedures and regulations. Skill in the operation of listed tools and equipment. Ability to train and supervise subordinate personnel; ability to perform work requiring good physical condition; ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; ability to exercise sound judgment in evaluating situations and in making decisions; ability to effectively give and receive verbal and written instructions; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, supervisors and the public; and ability to meet the special requirements listed below.

Special Requirements

Must be a member of the Amherst Fire Department who meets criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of promotion.

Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license without record of suspension or revocation in any State; no felony convictions or disqualifying criminal histories within the past seven years. Must be able to read and write the English language; must possess and maintain a current EMT-Basic certificate. Must meet the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32 with regard to the use of Tobacco products.

Tools and Equipment Used

Emergency medical aid unit and equipment, standard firefighting equipment, ladders, radio, pager, personal computer, phone.

Physical Demands

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

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

The employee must frequently lift and/or move up to 100 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 200 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

Work Environment

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

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly works in outside weather conditions. The employee occasionally works near moving mechanical parts and in high, precarious places and is occasionally exposed to wet and/or humid conditions, fumes or airborne particles, toxic or caustic chemicals, risk of electrical shock, and vibration.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, except during certain firefighting or EMT activities when noise levels may be loud.

Selection Guidelines

Promotional opportunity. Successful candidate must meet criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of promotion.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

Appendix VI-B – Division Fire Chief Job Description

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Level: F4
Fire Department
Division Chief

Job Summary

Performs varied technical, supervisory, and administrative duties associated with the operations of the Fire Department. In addition to regular duties and responsibilities, has primary responsibility for one specific staff assignment function such as EMS, fire prevention and education, training, or building and vehicle maintenance. Assumes direct command of all firefighting activity until relieved by Chief or Assistant Chief. May serve as Acting Chief or Assistant Chief during the absence and/or incapacity of either.

Supervision Received

Performs duties under the broad supervision of the Chief or Assistant Chief. Performs duties on own initiative, using considerable judgment regarding correct course of action.

Supervision Exercised

Provides broad supervision of Captains; assists Chief and Assistant Chiefs in the overall supervision of all Department employees.

Major Duties

1. Performs and/or oversees the inspections of buildings and facilities according to established laws and regulations. Responsible for issuance of permits, review of fire protection and prevention pre-plans, and responds to possible fire code violations reported by other Town Inspectors. Reviews reported code violations, inspection records, and permits granted by other personnel.
2. Plans and directs training programs for the shift including all administrative duties associated with maintaining training records. Provides technical and administrative supervision of all phases of firefighting and related work, including operations and maintenance of equipment. Assures that all subordinates who are directly engaged in firefighting are adequately trained.
3. As Operations Officer, responds to all box alarms, working fires, MCIs and other emergencies as seen fit: will not leave Town during shift (unless in extreme condition with approval of Fire Chief). Provides command at scene of a fire supervising personnel and delegating duties as operation progresses. Determines and executes specific fire fighting plan according to nature of fire, weather conditions, type of building, etc. Assists Chief and/or Assistant Chiefs upon their arrival on scene. Supervises call and student firefighters during emergency calls and while they are performing Department business or on Department property.
4. Responsible for timely completion of all departmental records concerning fire and EMS related responses occurring during the shift; utilizing fire run reports, dispatch reports, and yearly statistical reports.
5. Directs maintenance of stations and vehicles. Includes equipment and grounds, minor repairs to the stations, firefighting equipment and vehicles, all emergency medical attendant equipment and vehicles. Delegates individual maintenance duties to subordinates. Makes recommendations relative to purchase of supplies and equipment.
6. Will be assigned a staff function: i.e., EMS; Fire Prevention; Information Management; Maintenance.
7. Performs other duties as assigned.

Desired Minimum Qualifications

Bachelor's in fire science, emergency medical services, or closely related field, and at least two (2) years experience as a career Fire Officer in Amherst; or an Associate's Degree in fire science, medical services or a closely related field and at least five (5) years experience as a career Fire Officer in Amherst.

Extensive knowledge of modern fire suppression and prevention and emergency medical services principles, procedures, techniques, and equipment; extensive knowledge of first aid and resuscitation techniques and their application as demonstrated through State E.M.T Certification. Considerable knowledge of applicable laws, ordinances, departmental standard operating procedures and regulations. Demonstrated skill in operation of listed tools and equipment. Ability to train and supervise personnel; ability to perform work requiring good physical condition; ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; ability to exercise sound judgment in evaluating situations and in making decisions; ability to effectively give and receive verbal and written instructions; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, supervisors and the public; and ability to meet the special requirements listed below.

Special Requirements

Must be a member of the Amherst Fire Department who meets criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of promotion.

Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license without record of suspension or revocation in any State; no felony convictions or disqualifying criminal histories within the past seven years. Must be able to read and write the English language; must possess and maintain a current EMT certificate commensurate with collective bargaining agreement language. Must meet the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32 with regard to the use of Tobacco products.

Tools and Equipment Used

Emergency medical aid unit and equipment, standard firefighting equipment, ladders, radio, pager, personal computer, phone.

Physical Demands

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

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

The employee must frequently lift and/or move up to 100 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 200 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

Work Environment

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

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly works in diverse settings ranging from office work to extreme weather conditions. Occasionally works near moving mechanical parts and in high, precarious places and is occasionally exposed to wet and/or humid conditions fumes or airborne particles, toxic or caustic chemicals, risk of electrical shock, and vibration.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, except during certain firefighting or EMT activities when noise levels may be loud.

Selection Guidelines

Promotional opportunity. Successful candidate must meet criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of promotion.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

Appendix VI-C – Fire Captain Chief Job Description

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Level: F3
Fire Department
Captain

Job Summary

Performs varied duties in directing activities in the suppression of fires; emergency medical; supervising the cleaning, maintenance, testing, repair of fire department property and equipment; issuance of permits; participating in training requirements; assisting in inspections and pre-fire planning. Assignments include special staff functions.

Supervision Received

Performs duties under the general supervision of a Division Chief in accordance with departmental rules and regulations. Considerable judgment, diplomacy, and resourcefulness required in pursuit of required duties. Work is evaluated by observation of effectiveness of work performed, results, and inspection of equipment and records.

Supervision Exercised

Serves as group supervisor and station officer in charge of a firefighting crew responding to fires, in absence of a Chief Officer. Delegates duties to subordinates according to individual abilities and program requirements.

Major Duties

1. In the absence or incapacity of the Chief, Assistant Chief, or Division Chief, the Captain shall have full command of the Fire Department.
2. In response to fire calls, serves as officer in charge of a firefighting crew; serves as first in command on fires where a Chief Officer is not required; on major fires remaining in command until a Chief Officer arrives. Directs attack on fire and gives orders concerning manner in which the fire is to be fought. Relays status of fire or emergency, determines if additional support is necessary, gathers information at the fire scene, and prepares fire run reports.
3. Supervises work performed in the fire station. Reviews log reports from the previous shifts and informs personnel of new orders and notices, closed streets and hydrants, outages of alarm systems, in-service of or malfunction of equipment, and relays any other pertinent information to personnel and on-coming crews. Places personnel in specific work assignments for the shift, supervises repairs to apparatus and equipment if required; supervises housekeeping duties, new building projects, and repairs to the station. Inspects uniforms of firefighters coming in or going off duty. Enters all activities of shift in appropriate journals. If ranking officer, supervises call and student firefighters assigned to specific emergency calls or station coverage (when appropriate).
4. Assumes primary responsibility for a specific staff assignment function such as EMS, fire prevention and education, training, or vehicle and building maintenance.
5. Reports malfunctions of fire or EMS equipment and other problems to the appropriate Division Chief.
6. Provides guidance, direction and on the job training in the proper operations of fire and EMS vehicles and equipment. Assures adequate training time is scheduled and coordinates shift drills concerning streets, buildings, and hydrant locations, fire and EMS tactics and methods, with input from the Division Chief.
7. Performs fire prevention inspections of residential, academic and commercial building; prepares reports; and participates in public education programs and presentations.
8. Takes command at scene of a fire and supervises fire personnel; delegates duties as operation progresses. Determines and executes specific fire fighting plan according to nature of fare, weather conditions, type of building, etc. Engages directly in fire fighting as necessary. Receives and transmits orders from Chief officers. Assumes responsibility for other fire fighting units at scene of fire or other emergency until arrival of a Chief Officer.

9. Participates in training personnel under the general direction of a Division Chief.

10. Performs other duties as assigned, including a regular rotation on ambulance duty.

Desired Minimum Qualifications

Associate's in fire science, emergency medical services, or closely related field, and five (5) years of experience as career firefighter in Amherst, or any equivalent combination of education and five (5) years experience as a career firefighter in Amherst. Extensive knowledge of modern fire suppression and prevention and emergency medical services principles, procedures, techniques, and equipment; extensive knowledge of first aid and resuscitation techniques and their application as demonstrated through Massachusetts E.M.T certification. Considerable knowledge of applicable laws, standard operating procedures and regulations. Skill in the operation of listed tools and equipment. Ability to train and supervise subordinate personnel; ability to perform work requiring good physical condition; ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; ability to exercise sound judgment in evaluating situations and in making decisions; ability to effectively give and receive verbal and written instructions; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, supervisors and the public; and ability to meet the special requirements listed below.

Special Requirements

Must be a member of the Amherst Fire Department who meets the criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of promotion.

Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license without record of suspension or revocation in any State; no felony convictions or disqualifying criminal histories within the past seven years. Must be able to read and write the English language; must possess and maintain a current EMT certificate commensurate with the current version of the collective bargaining agreement. Must meet the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32 with regard to the use of Tobacco products.

Tools and Equipment Used

Emergency medical aid unit, fire apparatus, fire pumps, hoses, and other standard firefighting equipment, ladders, emergency medical equipment, radio, pager, personal computer, phone.

Physical Demands

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

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

The employee must frequently lift and/or move up to 100 pounds and occasionally lift and/or move up to 200 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

Work Environment

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

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly works in outside weather conditions. The employee occasionally works near moving mechanical parts and in high, precarious places and is occasionally exposed to wet and/or humid conditions, fumes or airborne particles, toxic or caustic chemicals, risk of electrical shock, and vibration.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, except during certain firefighting or EMT activities when noise levels may be loud.

Selection Guidelines

Promotional opportunity. Successful candidate must meet criteria established in the current collective bargaining agreement.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

Appendix VI-D – Fire Inspector Job Description

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Level: F-1

Fire Department

Fire Inspector

Job Summary

Serves as Inspector for Fire Prevention duties such as inspections; plan reviews; MGL Chapter 148 and 527 CMR Permit issuance; tests fire protection systems such as fire alarms, sprinklers and other fire suppression systems; conducts fire safety training for the public; trains line fire suppression personnel in fire prevention work; and can serve as a line firefighter/EMT on other than fire prevention shifts. Performs other related work as required.

Supervision Received

Performs duties under the direction of the Assistant Chief for Fire Prevention. Will make decisions on home plan reviews and tests of fire protection systems commensurate with Department, state and NFPA guidelines.

Supervision Exercised

May supervise line firefighters assigned to the Fire Prevention function from time to time and gives guidance to officers on 527 CMR 25 inspections.

Major Duties

1. Review, approve and/or modify building plans for compliance with MGL Chapter 148, 527 CMR, 780 CMR, NFPA and Department guidelines for fire protection.
2. Conduct acceptance and routine compliance testing of fire protection systems in new and existing buildings.
3. Issue Permits for fire prevention activities under MGL Chapter 148 and state 527 CMRs.
4. Attend “job meetings” for new building and renovation projects to give guidance and insure compliance with Department, state and NFPA regulations for fire protection.
5. Attend regional and state Fire Prevention Association meetings and educational seminars to keep current with Fire Prevention practices and changes in regulations.
6. May participate in fire drills, MGL Chapter 148 quarterly and state 527 CMR 25 occupancy inspections.
7. Conducts fire safety training for the public in general fire safety.
8. May serve as “Safety Officer” at major incidents.
9. Is able to work as a line firefighter/EMT when not on the normal fire prevention shift. Duties performed in this category fall under the job description of Firefighter/EMT.
10. Must have the ability to interact professionally and compassionately with the public, architects, engineers and other Town Departments relative to code issues.
11. Performs other duties as directed.

Desired Minimum Qualifications

Associate’s in fire science, emergency medical services, or closely related field, and five (5) years experience as career firefighter in Amherst, or any equivalent combination of education and five (5) years experience as career firefighter in Amherst. Working knowledge of building construction, fire and building codes, inspection practices, plan review and associated symbols, public presentations and instructional techniques, and working with the public.

Ability to follow verbal and written instructions; ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; ability to establish effective working relationships with employees, other agencies, and the general public; ability to meet all firefighting/EMT requirements and qualifications.

Special Requirements

Must be a career member of the Amherst Fire Department who meets criteria as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement.

Must possess a valid Massachusetts driver's license without record of suspension or revocation in any State; no felony convictions or disqualifying criminal histories within the past seven years. Must be able to read and write the English language. Must possess and maintain a current EMT certificate commensurate with the current version of the collective bargaining agreement. Must meet the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 32 with regard to the use of tobacco products.

Tools and Equipment Used

Department vehicle, computer, phone, radio, building and fire code books and reference materials, plan review utensils and equipment, fire protection testing meters and gauges. When operating as a firefighter/EMT, equipment applicable to that vocation and that job description must be utilized.

Physical Demands

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

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

The employee must frequently lift and/or move up to 100 pounds, and occasionally lift and/or move up to 200 pounds. Specific vision abilities include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and the ability to adjust focus.

Work Environment

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

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly works outside in hot or cold weather conditions. The employee occasionally works near moving mechanical parts and in high, precarious places and occasionally is exposed to wet and/or humid conditions, fumes or airborne particles, toxic or caustic chemicals, risk of electrical shock and vibration.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, except during certain firefighting or EMT activities when noise levels may be loud. These levels also may be high during construction reviews or the testing phases of fire protection systems. Hearing protection will be required.

Selection Guidelines

Successful candidate must meet criteria established in the current collective bargaining agreement.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and the requirements of the job change.