

Strategic Planning Report

Dennis Fire Department



Courage, Compassion, Commitment

April 2013

Executive Summary

The Town of Dennis is well served by the men and women of this organization.

This Strategic Planning Process is an internal review by our personnel, as compared to today's modern Fire Department practices and procedures.

As with any internal scrutiny of an organization, there must be the ability to analyze yourself in a critical sense while having a mutual understanding of the goal of improvement at all levels. This process can often be very difficult between labor interests and that of management, especially when both are at the same table. To their credit, personnel were forthcoming and candid while critically reviewing what they see as outstanding concerns and steps for improvement and how they do their business. Consequently, as Fire Chief, I felt an obligation to outline issues as I see them and recommendations for change.

Like any municipal fire department, it's history, past practices and it's internal culture have brought this agency to where it is today. This is a proud group of people who seemingly enjoy their job and are not so entrenched in tradition, that they are not unwilling to change. Personnel have made it clear, while they enjoy many of our current practices, they acknowledge that some change is inevitable and is the key to meeting their future demands. Clearly, limited staffing continues to be the biggest issue facing the Dennis Fire Department. Virtually all the department's issues revolve around a shortage of too few firefighters for the activity we are expected to deal with on a daily basis. These and other matters are discussed in detail in this report.

This report outlines our concerns as an organization, some of which may conflict between certain parties including management and labor and perhaps even other town agencies. There are 74 objectives at the conclusion of this document. Some objectives recommend maintaining current actions and policies and a good many others are changes or improvements needed to move the department forward. It is hoped that these will help mold a workable action plan for improvement in all areas.

The Dennis Firefighters, now and into the future, need continued Town support and that of myself and their next Fire Chief and administrative team, in an attempt to converting the bulk of these objectives into reality.

Mark Dellner

Dennis Fire Chief

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2005 Department Goal Setting Meeting

A full department meeting was held on September 21, 2005, at the Church of Nazzarine in South Dennis. The meeting centered on what the Fire Chief had observed and seen as some pending issues since taking command in January of 2005. Discussions were open to feedback and dialogue allowing us as an organization to set out to establishing goals and objectives for the agency. A Mission Statement was defined and five goals were established with defined definitions for:

- Administration
- Operations
- Fire Prevention
- Training & Safety
- Emergency Medical Services

Under each of the five goals, a number of objectives were set to meet each goals definition over the period of upcoming years. The Mission, 5 Goals and 42 Objectives were posted, published and updated in March of 2006 and defined the “plan” for Dennis Fire.

From that period until the date of our full Department Strategic Planning Session on April 5, 2012, personnel were briefed on the following results on their 2005/2006 Goal setting initiatives:

- 48 % of the established goals and objectives had been achieved
- 34 % should be re-visited, finished or pursued
- 18 % were not looking good and may have to be abandoned.

A full copy of that report is available in the Fire Chief’s Office for review.

The Strategic Plan Process of 2012/2013

The Dennis Fire Department embarked on an internal Strategic Planning process that took a critical and inside look at our internal process, our method of delivery, our procedures and our needs. The purpose of this process was to put together a strategic plan to address our internal objectives and make adjustments where necessary into the short and long term future of the organization.

The process involved 3 central parts, concluding with this report and it's recommended actions.

- **Full Department Meeting- Spring 2012.** All personnel, fulltime and call force, met at the Martin Community Room at the Dennis Police Station to discuss our department issues and concerns as a whole. While the Fire Chief presented a power point presentation to facilitate discussion points with all in attendance, the Assistant Fire Chief also provided a portion on change concepts. All agreed there was a good back and forth exchange of concerns and ideas between the presenters and the floor. Still, a few shared that perhaps not enough two way discussion was afforded, due to our time constraints that particular day.
- **Individual Personnel Surveys to Fire Chief- Spring & Summer, 2012.** The full department meeting was followed up with an anonymous personnel survey due back to the Fire Chief, focusing on safety, training, ideas, flow of information, morale, group cliques, condition of equipment and plans for the future. A copy of this Employee Survey is shown in *Appendix A*.
- **Group Meetings with Fire Chief- Summer & Fall 2012.** The Fire Chief held group meetings with all four of the fire departments work shifts to hear and discuss concerns from the membership. The compilation of information received began to develop based on membership issues and fire department best management practices. Discussions with some call force members also took place during this period.
- **Compilation Process for the Strategic Plan Document- Winter 2012/2013.** Tabulation of comments, critiques, action plan, objectives for strategies and discussion points have had to be formulated and put into this document as presented. This has included a review process in-house for all members, in draft form, before the printing of the final document for this plan.

Defining Our Four Basic Concepts

The four basic concepts we set out to define in this process include our vision, our mission, our values and our strategies put into objectives at the conclusion of this report.

- **Our Vision:** Outlines what the Dennis Fire Department wants to be, or how we want the world in which we operate, to be. It is more of a long-term view and concentrates on the future.
- **Our Mission:** Defines the fundamental purpose of the Dennis Fire Department, succinctly describing why we exist and what we need to do in order to achieve our vision. Our mission statement is included in this document as *Appendix B*.
- **Our Values:** Beliefs that are shared among the membership of the Dennis Fire Department. It was agreed and accepted that our values should drive our organization's culture and priorities and provide a framework in which our decisions are made every day. An example of what can best describe our value statement, can be seen in our departments Rules of Conduct 1-4 as part of our Standard Operating Guidelines. That SOG is attached as *Appendix C*.
- **Our Strategy:** Our strategy is reflected in our objectives at the conclusion of this report. It is a combination of the ends (goals) for which the Dennis Firefighters today are striving for and the means by which they seek to get there. A strategy is sometimes called a roadmap which is the path chosen to plow towards the end vision. For those strategies requiring outside financial or fundamental policy support, the most important part of implementing our strategies must involve a two way dialogue and cooperation between the Board of Selectmen and the Fire Chief.

Who are we, why do we exist, what do we do and for whom do we do it ?

The Dennis Fire Department is a progressive minded Class 3 combination fire department, which provides full fire protection, ALS (Advanced Life Support) emergency medical and rescue services, as well as public fire education to the Town of Dennis, Massachusetts. The Town fire protection and ALS services are provided for 5 distinct areas that make up the Town, namely Dennisport, West Dennis, South Dennis, East Dennis and Dennis, with a year round population of 16,850 and a regular summer population of 60-65,000. The Community is a blend of single and multiple story residences, multiple housing developments, complex commercial and business occupancies, including hotels, restaurants, bed & breakfasts, entertainment facilities, a large movie and Playhouse facility, mercantile and other facilities that cater to the tourist and visitor community as well as our residents. The Town is also noted for it's many miles of beaches, waterways, golf courses and it's marina that drive the tourism industry.

The department also protects a wide variety of multi-hazard occupancies including several open air malls or plazas, 3 large boatyards and marinas, children nursery & day care centers, a Middle School, Elementary School, an Aging & Senior Center, Elderly and low-income housing, a full scale elderly & living center (nursing home) and a host of other various community buildings, common to most communities.

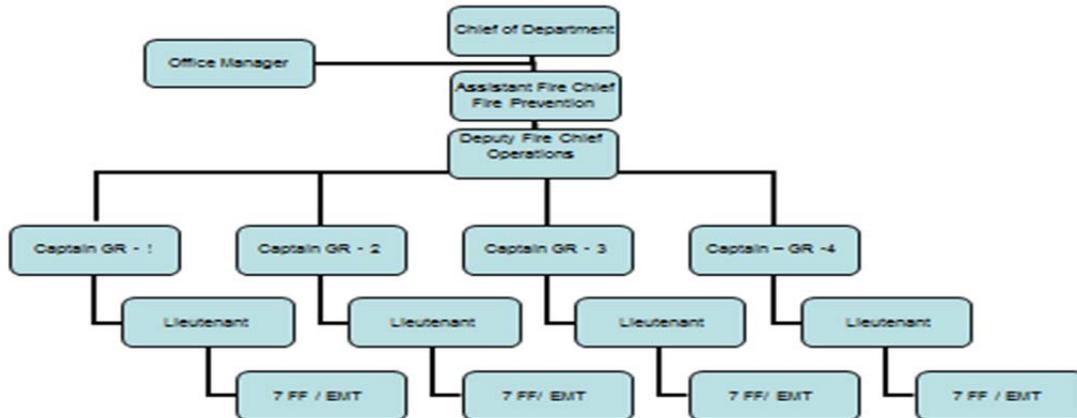
Our main legal and fiduciary responsibilities as a municipal fire department fall under Massachusetts General Law (MGL's) Chapters 42 and 148, 527 Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire safety Code (CMR's), titled 527 CMR and all applicable codes and sections of the Code of the Town of Dennis, Massachusetts. Our Emergency Medical Services division adheres to all laws, and regulations under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services. As such we comply to all required Statewide Treatment Protocols, and Appendixes. Copies of these documents can be obtained through normal business hours at Fire Headquarters in West Dennis or by contacting the Fire Chief.

Dennis Fire's call volume is almost 5,000 incidents per year to a wide variety of calls for service. This figure is well above the norm for a department of our size. The agency is currently the fourth busiest of the 15 Cape Cod communities. The department provides full mutual aid response to area fire departments upon request and has automatic mutual aid (line-box agreements) with our 3 bordering communities of Yarmouth, Harwich & Brewster.

Dennis Fire provides protection with 40 fulltime employees including a Chief, Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention & Inspection, Deputy Chief of Operations, Office Manager, 4 Captains, 4 Lieutenants and 28 Firefighters. The fulltime shifts are divided into 4 groups of 9 (before leaves & vacations) for the 2 two stations we staff. They work a 24 hr work schedule of 24 hours on, 24 hours off, 24 hours on and 4 days off.

The following Department Organizational chart illustrates our fulltime staffing:

Dennis Fire Department



Our department also has a roster of 6 paid-on-call firefighters, who supplement our full-time members at all structure fires and other department wide emergencies. Our call force members that are eligible, can and do, fill fulltime leave vacancies from time to time if fulltime members are unable to cover.

Our firefighters have come from different backgrounds or fire departments throughout the area. Between Stations 1 & 2, the Dennis Fire Department deploys 2 front line engines (one an ALS engine), 2 reserve engines, a 110 ft aerial ladder, 3 ALS Ambulances, a reserve ambulance, a brush fire truck, a dive rescue truck and 3 fire/rescue boats (2 deployed in water in summer months).

Dennis Fire Responsibilities

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression
- Fire Prevention, Investigation, Pub Ed
- Specialty Rescue Operations
 - *Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue (Confined space, below/above grade), Water & Dive Rescue*

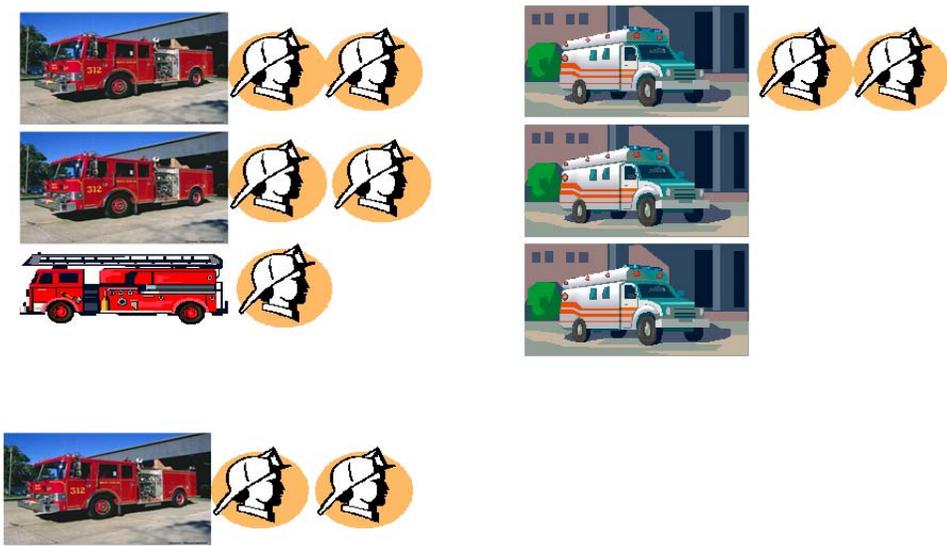
Staffing-

The Fire Department, by most all comparisons, is a busy agency, staffed by few too people to accomplish our goals of meeting the NFPA 1710, 4 man company responses and 2 in-2 out fire attack standards and recommendations. Like all the fire departments on Cape Cod and certainly in all other areas of the country, fire departments are balancing the need to provide quality EMS service with fire attack coverage at the same time. While 75% of our department's activity is EMS related and blends well with our fire operations, we often fall short of being able to properly staff our engine companies and ambulances. Subsequently, this can frequently leave our shifts, who are already short-handed, with inadequate fire attack and medical personnel, when a call is received.

Currently, at our minimum manning level which falls from 9 to 7 (72% of the time), we have only 5 firefighters at our headquarters to staff our first line engine, ladder truck, ambulances and other apparatus. This happens very frequently during the year, especially in the summer peak months. Therefore we can only staff our Station 2 Engine company with 2 firefighters at all times. It is very rare that due to leaves and vacancies that occur, that we have a full compliment of 9 firefighters or very often, do we have 8 firefighters available (17% of the time) to perform all of our needed functions. It is especially difficult to properly staff the first out engine at Headquarters when we have a priority 1 ambulance call at the same time, due to our limited manpower.

The situation and the percentages on how often the staffing arrangements present themselves, are depicted in the next three scenarios:

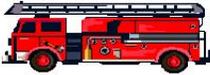
Staffing- 9 (11%)



Staffing- 8 (17%)



Staffing- 7 (72 %)



Northside Ambulance Inequity Issue

Currently, our agency runs 3 Ambulances in rotation out of Fire Headquarters in West Dennis. In order to properly and efficiently staff an Ambulance at Station 2 on the Northside, there must be a 3rd person duty assignment at that Station 24/7. As stated previously in this section, that staffing arrangement is only at 2 on duty. Thus, any medical aid call requiring the ambulance from Station 2's district, will have the Engine in that Station respond with 2 firefighters to treat and stabilize that patient, while an ambulance dispatched from Headquarters, often, depending on the type of emergency, with another 3 firefighters. This often results in 5 personnel in an engine and an ambulance that is delayed and coming from almost 8 miles away. In a bigger sense, this is an ineffective use of manpower and equipment for those in the Northside response area. Having the additional firefighter on duty at that location would take that response of 5 personnel and two pieces of apparatus and have a response of one ambulance and 3 firefighters, all things being equal.

The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee endorsed the Fire Chief's recommendation at the 2012 Annual Town meeting for a Proposition 2 ½ override question to fund 4 new paramedics and the Chief's plan to correct the ambulance inequity issue. The Chief at the same time, received approval to apply for a Federal SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) Grant, through Homeland Security and the Proposition 2 ½ override was tied to a reimbursement back to the Town for the first two years of the grant period. Voters overwhelmingly approved the Fire Departments Ambulance plan at the 2012 Town Meeting and at the ballot box, a week later.

Dennis was notified at the end of February 2013, that the grant was not able to be funded. As a result, as of the writing of this report, plans are underway by the Selectmen and Finance Committee, to include a Non-Binding Referendum question at the May 2013 Town election to allow residents to reaffirm their prior commitment and original staffing plan. This would maintain the already approved funds for the project of \$ 356,376, ensuring a three firefighter coverage plan at Station 2 for ambulance equity on the Northside.

As discussed with and in agreement with, the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee and Town Voters at several Town Meetings, the 3rd firefighter at Station 2 is critical to avoid logistical issues of being short-handed on certain high priority medical calls. Running an ambulance with less than 3 at Station 2 would almost certainly require more off-duty recall of personnel and periodic needs for a second paramedic on the Northside could cause more of a drain on our mutual aid departments. As stated in other sections of this report, the third person on certain high priority calls reduce the chances of injuries and provide an improved level of care. Simply, with the limited manpower issues for this Fire Department, three personnel at Station 2 with the ambulance should be a minimum staffing objective of this agency. Our request for manpower is to be spread among the 4 shifts, increasing our 9 man shifts to 10, with a minimum staffing of 8 at all times on duty. Thus, we would have the ability to staff an ambulance at Station 2 around the clock. To reduce staffing at Station 2 while still trying to provide the same level of care in ambulance response, would be a step backwards and go against what Town Officials and Town Voters intended in 2012/2013.

Overall Staffing Issues within the Department

The issue of firefighter manpower has been a long standing issue for the Town of Dennis. There have been 2 management studies paid for by the Town. There was a consultants summary on what issues should be addressed by the new Fire Chief, who was hired in 2005. All pointed to the need to address full-time staffing issues.

One such report, referred to as the Olney Report by Olney Associates in 1980, showed Dennis below manning comparisons of all listed Departments in the report, a trend listed in all subsequent reports and comparisons over the years.

In 1990, the Town commissioned DMG Associates of Waltham, Massachusetts and the 2005 Consultants report was prepared by Bennett/Yarger Associates of Scituate, Massachusetts. The decision of the Town over a number of years has been to utilize overtime to a greater deal in addressing staffing needs within the fire department. The use of overtime is a less costly option to hiring full time staff, however difficult economic times that the region and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have been experiencing, particularly in State aid funding back to local communities, has made cost cutting and streamlining a major focus in Dennis and in other communities. In addition, the State of Massachusetts has tax limiting legislation, Proposition 2 1/2, capping local communities abilities to expand programs and services to any major degree.

The Town of Dennis, also utilizes insurance and medicare reimbursements from our ALS & EMS program to help offset some salary, overtime and equipment costs for the fire department. Although this is a huge asset to the Town, it is not sufficient to fully offset more personnel in this fiscal environment without affecting the revenue structure we currently enjoy.



Part-Time Office Assistant for Office Manager

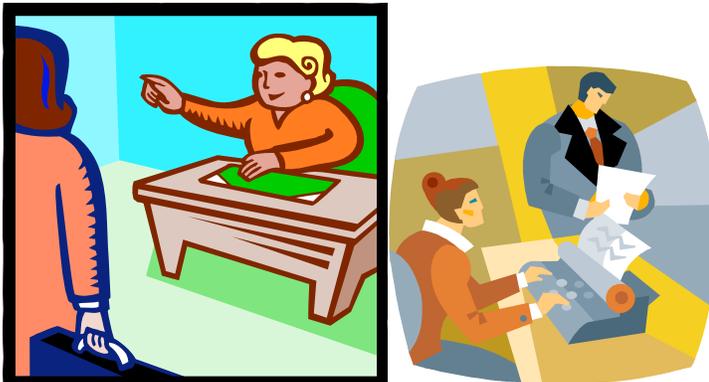
Currently the Office Manager position is a one person operation that has taken on more and more functions over the years, making it difficult to keep up with the load of needed work in a timely manner. A part-time, 15 hr per week position would assist our operation by helping with front door traffic with the public, administrative and normal telephone activity and primarily, accounts receivables. Other primary functions to help process a smoother work flow will be scheduling of permit inspections, mail processing and filing.

The person in that position would also be trained as time allows, in other front office functions such as ambulance billing and payroll on order to fill in upon the absence of the Office Manager. Almost 5 years ago, our fire department lost a fire dispatcher position in the front office area, who used to be able to deal with people seeking permits, telephone calls to the department, the general public looking for directions and all public contact in general.

In the past as well, the fire dispatcher was able to intercept people who came in for medical attention and blood pressure requests which are now being handled by the office manager while trying to perform her other administrative functions. It is not uncommon when other fire personnel are busy or not in quarters for the office manager to have to stop continually for the Station doorbell or phones ringing.

The normal workload of the front office functions in most all of the comparable sized fire departments and activity sometimes share 2-3 people doing the same workload of the one here in Dennis.

In addition, when the Office Manager is on any type of leave or absence, there is no one in-house to perform these functions or even the normal primary jobs needing to be done such as payroll and overtime processing, personnel file management, accounts receivables and payables, ambulance billing, scheduling, management of fire department reports, all needing daily attention to detail. The bigger issue to be corrected is the constant interruptions to our daily workflow and the deadlines we are required to meet.



Overtime-

Consultants Overview for Incoming Fire Chief regarding Overtime - 2004

....” political leaders must address the staffing needs of the department and either publicly endorse the hiring of additional manpower or accept the utilization of overtime to provide adequate shift coverage.”

***Bennett Yarger Associates Management Consultants-
March 2004***

“ There is a difference of opinion as to whether hiring additional personnel or utilizing overtime is the best way to provide sufficient shift coverage, and the new Chief must provide a clear and strong recommendation on this long-standing issue.”

***Bennett Yarger Associates Management Consultants-
March 2004***

Overtime History-

The Town and the Fire Department in 2004 were embroiled in debates on whether it was best to continue hiring firefighters on overtime to address staffing vacancies in the department or whether hiring more firefighters was the best way to proceed in addressing the issue.

Addressing this question was one of the primary goals of the new Chief in January of 2005. In doing so, all past management reports, current trends and statistics, management internal processes, the collective bargaining agreement with the firefighters and the work done by the outgoing Fire Chief and the Acting Fire Chief at the time, were all important factors in making sound recommendations back to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.

The incoming Chief concluded that in order to make significant and immediate reductions in fire overtime, the Town needed to invest in not one, two or even four firefighters but to develop a plan to increase staffing from a minimum of 9 on each duty shift to 12 per duty shift. This would provide a buffer to absorb leaves and vacancies on each shift without having to hire back as many firefighters on overtime.

This would have reduced the overtime costs by about 45%, or at the time from about \$ 830,000 to something in the area of \$ 457,000. Obviously that would be offset by a significantly larger salary and benefits cost of the 12 new firefighters totally approximately \$ 800,000 more in the FY '06 fire budget appropriation. That \$ 800,000 increase would not have factored in the additional training, uniform and equipment costs of adding new positions.

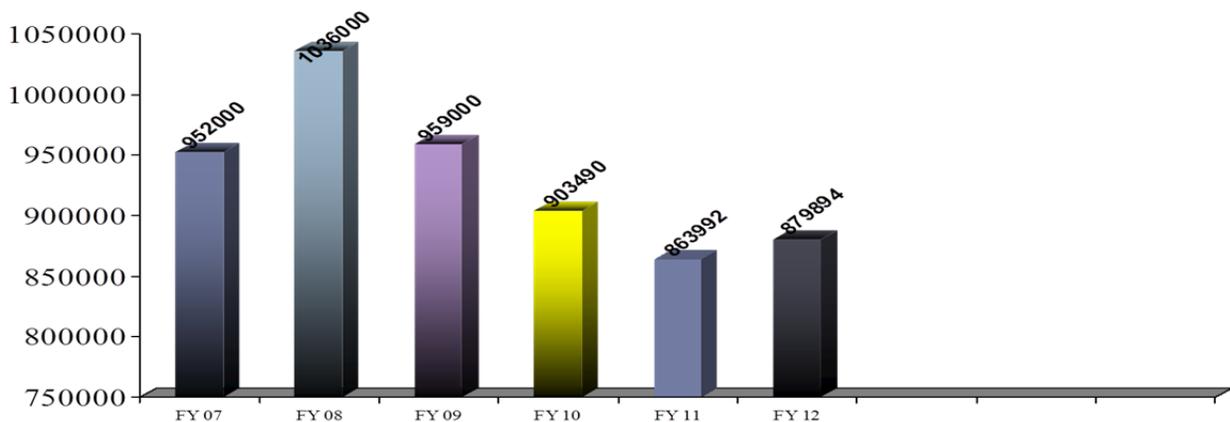
The Fire Chief recommended the significant increase of the new firefighters in the spring 2005 budget discussions in a joint meeting between the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen, however unfortunately, the discussion became lost in an acrimonious debate between the Fire Chief and some members of the Finance Committee at the time. While the Town Finance Committee made reference to the staffing issue needing to be brought to the voters through a Proposition 2 ½ over-ride, there really was not the Town support needed to make such an investment in that many firefighters whether over time or all at once, especially with the regional economic forecast on the horizon.

The work on overtime reductions and controls continued to take place in the subsequent months and years through internal management controls, a change in some practices and through several years of bargaining agreement negotiations and concessions between management & labor.

The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee made a decision to convert the Fire Department Emergency Dispatch operation over to Barnstable County in 2008. That decision also made a significant reduction in overtime costs by allowing one more vacancy on each shift to not be filled. The estimate of savings in overtime is approximately \$ 200,000 per year, but approximately \$ 100,000 of that savings is paid through the services side of the budget annually to the County Dispatch organization.

In summary, today, the Town has endorsed by way of it's budgetary decisions, to address staffing needs with the lower cost of overtime vs the significantly higher cost of wages and benefits. In addition, the Town has increased it's fire department overtime account to \$865,000 in the FY'13 operating budget, with the intended goal to not provide spring supplemental appropriations each year, which in the past has totaled in the areas of \$ 125,000 annually.

This overtime appropriation chart indicates the results of combined efforts and goals towards attempts to minimize overtime costs while trying to still maintain effective services to the community.



Category Percentages for Overtime (Approximate)-

Departmental Meetings, Details & Projects	1 %
Arson & Fire Investigations	< 1 %
Coverage for Day Shift Vacancies	23 %
Coverage for Night Shift Vacancies	29 %
Court/Jury Duty	< 1 %
Log Duty Entry	< 1 %
EMS Supervisor Duties	3 %
Fire & EMS Emergency Recalls	34 %
<i>("Stacking" of recalls < 1 %)</i>	
Fire & EMS Training	5 %
Inspection Overtime	< 1 %
Mechanic Overtime	2 %
Weather Related Overtime	<u>1 %</u>
	100 %

Management Study of the Dennis Fire Department by

DMG Maximus, Waltham Massachusetts-October 2000

Method of Staffing- “Current approaches to staffing appear to be reasonable given current risks and service demands faced by the fire department.”

Covering leave with overtime- “Overtime utilization for covering leave and other routine causes appears to be reasonable and managed.”

Using 3 firefighters on certain high priority calls- “ This is unusual, though effective practice and should be continued.”

This 2000 Management Study of the Dennis Fire Department made a number of suggestions and recommendations in it’s final report. Some of the recommendations were enacted by the prior administration and some were not, mainly due to financial and operational concerns at the time. At the time of change in Fire Chiefs in 2005, the document was scrutinized once again with an effort to see what steps could work and what steps might not work so well. The top three comments in the report, as it relates to fire overtime, are still in place today. Reasonable approaches to how we staff, how we manage leave with overtime and how we handle high priority calls are three positive factors that contribute towards effective use of overtime monies spent.

Long Standing Practices and Perceived Stacking of Overtime

While there will always remain minor issues with overtime practices in a general sense, there are not many significant changes left that we can enact without taking more chances with delayed responses, changing our patient care standards or violating the collective bargaining agreement. The past several years have seen much in the way of changes in the culture of overtime. One only needs to look at the dips in the escalation of overtime dollars expended to realize that steps taken internally and through negotiations have made an impact. One long time practice that some in the community may raise from time to time, is the so called, "stacking" of overtime, whereby, somebody coming in for off duty recall coverage (minimum 2 or 4 hours), being released and coming back in for another coverage within that time span. The amount of times that happens is very miniscule compared to the balance of getting people in on coverage when needed. This is a perception issue of a problem that really is not so. There are no plans on changing this practice however we will continue to monitor the matter closely. Some steps have been made in decreasing the amount of 4 hour minimum coverage's over the past 2 contracts and high volume periods have had increased staffing levels in order to help minimize overtime dollars spent.

Sick and Injury Leave

Fulltime municipal fire department averages for sick leave use varies over the course of the year. There are many factors for these numbers. Long term sickness or injury that is non-job related, union contract incentives for employees careful management of their sick leave, negative attitudes or a culture of abuse, employee wellness initiatives and a combination of management oversight and follow up is critical to sick leave management. The Dennis Firefighters labor contract allows employees the use of 15 days leave per year. The last two fiscal years for Dennis Fire has averaged 7.6 to 8 days of use per year. That number is low compared to a number of area department's average use of 13-14 days per year. Annual analysis of sick leave by employees, both by spot checking and review of patterns by department management, do not indicate a "sick leave problem" within the fire department.

Group Transfers

The Dennis Fire Department, like all fire departments, uses a group system for 24 hour coverage, whereby members are assigned to one of 4 groups of 9. Each group is made up of a Captain, Lieutenant and currently 7 firefighters. The groups assigned are Group 1, 2, 3 or 4. Each groups work schedule is a constant known, simply by looking at a calendar. Over the course of time, some fire department administrations will break up the groups and mix people and talents around so as to allow employees to work with others they normally would not come into contact with. This can break up cliques and has some positive benefits. The other side of the equation is that leaving groups intact with their supervisors, provides a better sense of teamwork and comradery within the unit, over the long term.

Another obvious benefit of staying with the same group, is that their work schedule can be easier planned with their family and outside interests from the fire department. This option also has other benefits. When the employees were asked this question above, both the full department meeting and

the employee surveys indicated a resounding no. Most feel that between retirements and promotions, it all works out. Management is convinced that due to our system of filling vacancies, members do in fact have ample opportunity to work with others on other groups. At this writing, there is no plan to break up groups or supervisors.

Call Force

Call firefighters are defined as receiving an hourly pay or annual stipend for their services. In Dennis, we currently retain 6 Call Firefighters who come in to assist on working structure fires or emergency scenes. Dennis is one of the few comparable sized departments who still support and retain call firefighters on our roster. Today's fire service requires a higher level of qualification standards to meet minimum standards. Call or part-time firefighters are harder to attract and retain as most work out of Town or Off-Cape at their full time jobs. Many communities are eliminating call firefighters due to training, equipment and liability issues. In Dennis, we support the program in general and require that all personnel who now join be required to be a minimum level Barnstable County Level 1 & 2 certified firefighter before being allowed to work on the fireground. In addition, as EMT's or Paramedics, they may be allowed to periodically fill in to assist with ambulance work, when full time personnel are not available. This is totally unheard of today in many fire departments but is a long standing tradition held in this agency. Many of the full time employees have come from the call force ranks themselves. Having a small roster of Call firefighters also allows us to evaluate and mentor future or prospective full time staff. This department will normally try and give preference to our call firefighters as long as they meet our established goals for the position. Call firefighters are not required to attend the 12 week full time firefighting academy at Stow, MA as are the full time firefighters.

Use of Call Firefighters in Dennis

- Today Fire Service requires higher level of qualification standards..."Trade"
- Call Firefighters work fulltime jobs
- Harder to attract and retain, most work out of Town
- Many communities are eliminating due to Training, Equipment, Liability Issues



Headquarters Station and Sub Station Buildings

Dennis has two Fire Stations covering the almost 24 square miles from Cape Cod Bay, 8 miles south to Nantucket Sound. The Main Fire Headquarters, referred to as Station 1 is on Rt 28 in West Dennis and the Fire Sub Station, referred to as Station 2 is on Old Bass River Rd near the intersection of Rt 6A in the village of Dennis.

Station 1

Station 1 was built in 2000 and is a 2 story, 8 bay facility, housing the Administration divisions of the Fire Department operation as well as the majority of the personnel and vehicles and apparatus. The building, at this writing, is a clean and functional facility, however in 2005, many issues came up with heating, plumbing and air conditioning problems that needed to be addressed and repaired. In the winter months and cold weather, the heat could not be adjusted and maintained with the upstairs areas being so hot, windows had to be cracked at all times. Consequently, the summer or warmer weather, was so cold, it become uncomfortable at times. The department contracted local HVAC vendors to do an analysis of our problems and give an estimate of repairs. Two vendors, walked away and did not wish to be involved in the major repairs needed. It was found that many of the valves and HVAC switches were installed backwards with check valves in the wrong direction during construction. The Fire Department spent almost \$8,000 to repair the long standing issues and the system is working better today.

As the building is now approaching 13-14 years old, issues such as painting and regular maintenance arise and repairs are made to problems on a priority basis through the Town Buildings Department. Much of the past budget for Building and HVAC repairs have been moved to that department. The Buildings Department and Fire Department have met frequently to review both buildings repair and maintenance needs and hope to come under an umbrella of a Town comprehensive plan for those services. One major issue at Station 1 that will soon need attention is the building central air conditioner which Public Buildings reports to be in dire need of replacement.

Overall, Station 1 needs maintenance and will need repairs. It is essential that planning needs and a system of prioritization, continue with our Public Buildings Department on a regular basis.

In terms of it's location, Station 1 serves the Town well for rapid response to the Southside districts. It's location on Route 28 near the intersection of Route 134, give our responding units excellent access to most areas of Town.

Station 2

Station 2 was built in 1956. It is a two story, two bay building that is outdated for today's modern Fire Department needs. The outside appearance has been updated with new Cape Cod shingles, new roof, new replacement windows and exterior painting of trim. The inside however is cramped and outdated as a modern living facility. The role of Station 2 has also evolved over the years from it's primarily use as Call Force Station to fulltime Fire & Emergency Medical personnel who occupy the facility 24/7.

Two firefighters occupy the building at this writing, however the needs have expanded in the Northern response districts to the point, more personnel will be needed. During upstaffing, due to storms or peak summer activity, there is not enough room to properly house firefighters overnight or long durations.

The building is not energy efficient or ADA compliant. The backup generator is an older model Onan brand generator. The pavement in the front apparatus bay and where the trucks exit the station is buckled, uneven and is flooded frequently. The apparatus bays have become too small for today's fire apparatus. The current main pumper housed there fits in by a mere inch or two and caution needs to be exercised as the wheels of the truck drop in the pavement lip as it exits the building, causing it to jump up and down. The newest pumper bought by the Town cannot be housed there due to the restrictions of the door frames and height restrictions. The main drains on the apparatus bay floods often and fails to drain adequately. There is no space for storage of EMS supplies and decontamination of fire and medical gear according to today's federal requirements. These are just a few examples of the major issues there today.

Community discussions will need to take place soon regarding the Station 2 issue. While clearly, the need is in place for that Station on the Northside, three central questions will need to be considered and decided.

- Do we do major renovations to a facility that is already limited on it's present footprint on site ?
- Do we build new on it's present site, again, with the same property line restrictions ?
- Do we find suitable property nearer the area of Rt 134 and Setucket Rd that gives us improved response times to build a new sub station and either retain or sell the old Station 2 site ?

The Town 5 year Capital Plan includes an amount of \$ 45,000 in 2017 for design plans for Station 2 and \$ 1,900,000 for construction in 2018 (\$ 271 per sqft for a 7,000 square sqft facility).

Buildings and Facilities Equipment Replacement Program

The Fire Department is unique compared to other Town buildings as our two stations provide living and housing facilities for 24 hour coverage. This is common in all communities. What is not common in all communities is what level of assets are supplied and maintained for the firefighters living arrangements. The obligations the Town has to its firefighters living facilities and it's fixtures, appliances and furniture assets has never been identified as a problem. What has not been done, is to complete an asset inventory and provide a systematic budget for replacement of common everyday items in our facilities. Most all or a majority of our fixed assets and appliances in our two stations are original equipment from when the Headquarters Station was built in 2000, left over from years past or donated by outside parties or firefighters from home. Discussions from personnel indicate a desire to establish a Facility Equipment Replacement Program, assigned to a line item within the annual budget for all items in our inventory eligible to be purchased under this program. The decisions should be made on an annual priority basis, contingent of course, on funding availability.

The complete station inventory for both fire stations and what would be eligible to be funded within the proposed replacement plan are listed in *Appendix D*.

Portable Fire Equipment Replacement Program

A need raised in the fire department is to provide for an annual replacement program for our department's fire and rescue portable equipment. The department undertook a comprehensive inventory of all items eligible to be listed in this inventory and replacement plan.

The Equipment which is mostly carried on our fire apparatus for firefighting and rescue purposes, is listed in this program. Most of these tools and pieces of equipment have been transferred a number of times, over many years, from truck to truck or one location to another, without a systematic plan of replacement or an annual allocation, or budget line item. Some of this equipment has outlived its useful life and needs a systematic replacement plan. The customary process of replacement is to replace the item only when it becomes destroyed or is no longer functional. In past years, the only portable equipment identified in the line items for budget replacement has been for hose, nozzles and protective firefighting gear that had been damaged. We would like to be more proactive in our scheduling of regular replacement based on use and service life into a portable equipment replacement plan. The actual budget line assignments can be varied whether it is classified as a new supply or a replacement.

Most all or a majority of Ambulance and EMS portable equipment is accounted for under the Medical Supplies account or in the ambulance replacement account, therefore, not included in this section.

With this full inventory assessment of portable fire equipment, each item will be assigned a useful life span and prioritized on an annual basis, contingent of course, on available funding. The list of portable fire and rescue equipment eligible under this replacement plan is listed in *Appendix E*.

Apparatus Maintenance Program

Vehicle Maintenance, both preventative and on-going, are a major focus in our department to help ensure our readiness at all times. With almost 5,000 calls a year of all types with vehicles going from a cold start to high performance, there are bound to be maintenance issues that arise, even with the best of programs. Each day at 8 am and 6pm, all motorized vehicles are checked by on-duty firefighters in both stations. Each vehicle has a notebook and daily check sheets and is signed off by the firefighter checking it that all is in order. Problems or discrepancies are noted to the on-duty shift commander and a work order or repair notice is issued to our mechanics.

If serious enough to be taken out of service, one of the two department mechanics may be called in to try and put the unit back in service.

The mechanics are properly trained and certified and are fulltime firefighters within our department. They report directly to the Deputy Chief of Operations for vehicle maintenance issues. The current program has been modified and put in place approximately 6 years ago. Although it is a marked improvement from the past, the firefighters, overall, seem to have confidence in the program and think the mechanics are doing the best they can with what they have. Individual surveys, pretty much back that up. Asked what they would rate the condition of our Fire Apparatus, on an A-F rating, all came back with A's & B's. One noted a C. Two points were emphasized for improvement of the maintenance program. A number of our members thought we should have a fulltime mechanic on staff or at least a part time mechanic to just handle the everyday work load. Some feel that while doing a good job, the two mechanic system is often overwhelmed. The second and more pronounced concern by the membership is there should be a system implemented for the mechanics to communicate back to the firefighters that they have seen, acknowledged, have plans for or what is going on, even if a short note or comment back to the person who wrote up the problem. Often after a firefighter writes up a discrepancy or repair order, nothing is heard of afterwards. This reverse communication back to members is critical to ensure the confidence with the program remains in place.

The annual Vehicle Repair account has been increased over the past several years from \$25,000 to it's current level of \$35,000. This account is still underfunded for a fleet of our size and does not allow us to have a strong preventative maintenance schedule. We hope to be able to increase this section by 35% over the next 3 years in order to accomplish our preventative maintenance needs.

Apparatus Replacement Program & Inventory

The Fire Department, with the support of Town leaders and Town meeting voters, has established a vehicle replacement plan, in order to spread out the cost of department inventory based on industry standards for fire apparatus and ambulance useful life cycles. Our major apparatus (pumpers and ladder trucks) replacement is based on National Fire Protection Association standards. The vehicle replacement plan is built into the Town's 5 year Capital Budget plan. It is modified from year to year as Town priorities dictate and become adjusted. The core replacement program is as follows:

- Fire Pumpers (Engines) Every 15-20 years
- Aerial Ladder Every 20-25 years
- Staff Vehicles Every 10 years or 100,000 miles
- Ambulances Every 6-7 years

Our Ambulance Replacement program is an essential and effective plan, whereby an ambulance is replaced every other year in a rotation cycle so that when an ambulance is due to be replaced, they are no more than 6-7 years old and about 120-130,000 miles, going out the door. Our overall strategy to balance the ambulance rotation, is to normally put the newest ambulance up front as the first vehicle out and the next ambulance is 2nd in rotation and normally the oldest ambulance is used when the other two are tied up. We operate with 3 ambulances which are maintained in rotation and ready to go. We were recently approved to maintain a spare ambulance, available if there is maintenance or other long term issues that arise with the 3 in-service units. This trial program is defined in further detail in the Medical Services section of this report. The department has tried several times in past years to have the Town hold onto a spare ambulance for this very purpose and the department appreciates the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen's support in our plan to maintain a fleet back up unit.

Our Departments 1994 Aerial Ladder was sent out for a major refurbishment project in 2010 through the Town's Capital budget plan, which basically rebuilt the major components for \$ 225,000. This project has built another 15 years into the useful life of that truck under our replacement plan.

Our fire pumper fleet for our two Stations is two front line pumpers and two reserve pumpers. They are now within our replacement plan standards as are our three department staff vehicles. We also have a pick up utility truck, a brush fire response 4x4 and a Dive Rescue truck that will be in our upcoming replacement plan for retirement. Our boat inventory is in a different section of this report and that equipment is not in our vehicle replacement plan as those units have historically been able to be replaced under a federal surplus replacement plan with no or little cost to the Town.

An annual fire department vehicle inventory report is generated each year by the Fire Chief's office, showing the vehicle number, description, miles and hours. The report is shared each year with the Capital Outlay, Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen when reviewing the Fire Department Capital Plan. A copy of this year's vehicle inventory report is included in *Appendix F*.

Radio Communications

Prior to 1992 the Dennis Fire Department and surrounding towns were all using a single channel, low frequency style radio. A very powerful but very limited radio when it came to area coverage and firefighter safety. In most communities the only person to have a portable “Walkie-Talkie” style radio was the Chief or the first officer on location of an incident. Firefighters who got into trouble because they were lost or trapped had no way of communicating to the Officer in Charge. This brought major safety changes in communications to the fire service.

In 1992 the towns in the region along with the rest of Barnstable County Fire and Police Departments received funding from the State to implement a new type of radio system. The radio system was acquired and was used during the Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia back in the early 90’s. This new radio system included a very high frequency 800 MHz radio with multiple channels and frequencies. Also included were built-in safety measures for the firefighters and police. The radios allowed for scanning other towns and communities and also included different channels for operations.

The Town utilizes two of our water towers for antenna locations to optimize good transmission and receiving capabilities from across our 5 villages and beyond. This system today is monitored and maintained by the Massachusetts State Police.

Currently the radios that we have been using are twenty years old or older and are past their service life. Companies that manufacture these radios are no longer supporting or making parts for them so when a radio breaks it needs to be discarded. This brings a tremendous financial burden on the town to replace these going forward when dealing with tight budgets.

In addition, new technologies have arisen that have created a demand for the same frequencies that the fire service and other public safety industries have been using with the explosion in cellular and smart phone use. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the phone companies are negotiating and changing the way public safety are using frequencies. The FCC has ordered that all public safety radios be re-banded on the frequency scale by the end of 2012 and is now looking at a totally different system using a 700 MHz frequency.

Realizing the inevitable of having to replace an entire cache of radio the Town of Dennis Fire Department in cooperation with the Police and surrounding communities have applied for a grant for over eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) dollars from the federal government for the replacement of all its radios. If approved, the grant would be an 80/20 percent government match.

This grant would allow for the town to upgrade to the most current and future technologies that are currently being used in public safety. A request for one hundred and fifty five (155) portable radios and seventy four (74) mobile radios has been submitted for in the grant. The new radios will be compatible with the P-25 standards in radios and bring us in compliance with the NFPA, SAFECOM and Department of Homeland Security standards.

The expanded capabilities of the new radios will allow for multiple frequency use extending its service life for another ten to twenty years.

The grant will allow for other upgrades that would include the town's back-up radio system. This system operates on a 400MHz frequency and was designed and developed in 2006 in the event that the current public safety radio system was to fail.

In addition to having a back-up system the town has embraced the 400MHz band radio as its everyday operating frequency for all other departments in town. This allows for interoperability when dealing with major disasters or acts of Mother Nature.

The fire department currently maintains and oversees the current inventory of the 400 MHz band radios for the town. This includes replacement parts and frequency adjustments to installations. It also through the use of contracts maintains the antennae's and back-up generators that support the system.

The future in communications is virtually unknown with the rapid changes in technologies and the advancements in wireless communications. New innovations with GPS tracking, caller ID and automatic voice prompting that aids firefighters in low visibility are some of what's available now and we have all seen these changes just with our cell phones but like our cell phones we must develop a plan to meet the changes for the upgrades. This can become costly if not budgeted or planned for but not as costly as losing a life if someone couldn't be heard during an incident.



Fire Education

Public Fire Education is an important part of the school curriculum. It becomes a challenge to obtain time in the classrooms due to scheduling. Teachers are strapped for time as it is, meeting the goals of their own curriculum.

The Fire Department needs to establish a team of trained Public Safety Educators to provide instructional skills to students of all ages. The team must be paid as volunteer activities in the past have been a failure. The approach to team building must be structured and individuals selected must make a commitment and be accountable.

Historically the Public Education component of the Department has been placed in the Fire Inspectional Division. Although the Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention is certified in both jobs, and enjoys participating in the education component, there needs to be much more depth to the department. The two jobs are different, and must be looked at as so. We have some talented individuals in the Department that show interest in Public Education and have demonstrated the desire to be involved in the program. Unfortunately, many times the occasion for fire education arises, the shift on duty or someone from the detail box gets stuck with the assignment with little or no preparation or desire to participate in the educational process. The current Fire Prevention Chief and Fire Chief believe all firefighters should be part of the prevention process, and we need to encourage that ideal.

Fire Inspection and Enforcement

The main issue facing this Fire Department is defining a thorough process for completing inspections as defined by MA Fire Prevention Regulations 527 CMR. There are hundreds of required inspections the department is obligated to perform and permits to issue. The most pressing issue we see is the absence of secretarial support for Fire Prevention. Records management is mandated by law. Scheduling, communication; written or phone; follow up letters, and documentation are all the responsibility of the inspector. In comparison, the building department has three inspectors as well as three staff positions; the health department also has three inspectors and a support staff of three.

As a whole the Town needs to look at consolidating the many database systems they have. The police department uses IMC, The building and health agents use GEO TMS, the fire department uses Firehouse Software, the assessors uses PK, the licensing board and the Town clerk use different products from others. A long term goal should be to work toward a common and sharable system.

Fire and Arson Investigation

The Dennis Fire Department has a good working relationship with the Dennis Police as well as the State Fire Marshal's Office. When needed, we call on the State Police Fire Marshal Unit for their expertise, resources, technical specialists and criminal investigation authority. The fire department is obligated to call them in many situations. We as firefighters do not have the ability or authority to do criminal investigations, questioning, surveillance or arrest. Our recommendation is to continue to use the State Fire Marshal's office on investigations. We work closely with them and will continue to, into the future. Rather than duplicate these services here at the local level, we do not see the need to further develop an arson or investigation group of our own within the department. The Fire Marshal's office has jurisdiction when they arrive at the scene of an arson fire. Their experience and technical capability is an excellent asset for us to draw on.



Firefighting Abilities and Industry Standards (NFPA/OSHA)

Our ability to fight fires is an area that our department does very well at and is respected for, with other fire departments in the area. Dennis is known as aggressive and experienced firefighters. They are known for a culture of fighting the fire from the inside and pushing fire out. The only restrictions placed on the fire scene commanders at fires in Dennis, are lower number of firefighters responding to today's fires. This is true industry wide but Dennis is recognized for having a lot fewer firefighters than others of our Towns size, demographics and call frequency. The fire scene commander in Dennis has the authority to call for whatever resources needed to establish a safe fire scene when committing personnel and equipment into harms way. Dennis is not able to meet the initial NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) requirement for numbers of firefighters, on responding apparatus for a "working" structure fire but our agency has worked closely with our neighboring Towns to develop a "line box" mutual aid agreement. These agreements will automatically start the nearest out of Town department to a reported building fire and is reciprocal. Should the reported fire not require the services of the mutual aid line box, that department is immediately cancelled. That combined with our automatic recall of off duty firefighters of possible building fires have given us a better chance to meet our goal. Also at risk is the OSHA requirement of 2 in - 2 out. This requirement states that before interior firefighting takes place for 2 firefighters inside, there must be at least 2 outside to provide back up and exterior evolutions such as ventilation. Again, our limited staffing needs to be monitored when committing to fireground tactics. The next section, **Fireground Task Analysis**, reviews our initial firefighting response and responsibilities in slightly more detail.

The departments firefighting abilities are enhanced with good training as stated in another part of this report. In addition, Dennis Fire has replaced all the firefighting gear such as coats, bunkers pants, gloves and helmets 2 years ago and last year, we were successful in replacing the firefighters air packs and harnesses with new units. Their portable equipment such as axes, nozzles, hose, saws and the trucks themselves are in top notch condition. The upcoming fiscal year will have a proposal for a systematic portable equipment replacement budget where every tool will have an identified useful life and be planned for replacement in annual operating budget proposals. It is hoped the Town will continue to support this systematic plan to keep their firefighting gear updated.

In summary, Dennis Firefighters do very well, are trained and experienced for their firefighting abilities and they have good equipment. The staffing issue within the fire department needs to be addressed in the macro sense, incrementally. In the meantime, we need to continue to recognize and take into account our limitations on the fireground until we have enough firefighters on scene to operate effectively and efficiently.

Fireground Task Analysis

Based on our on duty staffing at present, our ability to meet the NFPA 1710 and OSHA 1910 compliance standards, which set out the number of responding firefighters and the 2 in, 2 out guidelines, are difficult to meet. Specifically, NFPA recommends (as stated in the previous section) an initial response to any reported building fire to meet a goal of assembling 15 personnel in 8 minutes, 90% of the time. At full shift staffing (only 11% of the time), our structure fire response is 9 on duty firefighters on 2 engines and an aerial, a Chief Officer and a 4 man engine response from an automatic line box response policy from the nearest mutual aid community to the incident, per policy. This number totals 14. We have a reciprocal automatic line box policy for reported structure fires with the 3 neighboring Town's to Dennis. We estimate currently, only about 20% of that time, we may have another one of our Chief Officers available to meet that 15 person goal. Should we be able to add 4 new firefighters to the department roster (one per duty shift), our initial response will be increased to 10 men on duty, a Chief Officer and a 4 man automatic line box response, bringing the compliment to 15 to help us meet our goal in meeting the NFPA 1710 standard.

The tasks performed by the 15 personnel on a structure fire response, should involve the following initial fireground responsibilities:

Fireground Task Analysis		
<u>Response</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u># Persons</u>
• 1 st Due Engine	Initial Attack	2
• 2 nd Due Engine	Back Up Line	2
• Mutual Aid Engine	RIT	3
• 1 st & 2 nd Engine	Water Supply	2
• 1 st Due Rescue	Search & Rescue	2
• Off Duty Truck	Ventilation	2
• Chief Officer	Incident Command	1
• Safety Officer	Scene Safety	<u>1</u>
		15

Per National Fire Protection Association Standards



Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Delivery & Process

The process of how we respond to our EMS responsibilities and how we deliver that service is highly regarded by our firefighters as they carry out their responsibilities as either an Emergency Medical Technician or a Paramedic in the field. Consequently, they go about their business without much public fanfare on a daily basis. Our department receives numerous cards, letters and phone calls of thanks and appreciation on a regular basis. The majority of comments and sentiment are not just about the fact they did their job well but mostly in “how” they did it. The Dennis Fire Department is lauded in the community as being caring and compassionate to those they are serving. This culture of a positive “bedside manner” is often what our patients remember, long after their contact with our firefighters.

This positive culture that our firefighters are so proud of does not come without a cost and a commitment that constantly needs attention to detail and focus. Our EMS system is constantly being critically reviewed and adjusted to maintain it’s highest quality that the Dennis community has been accustomed to.

In 2011, Dennis Fire responded to 3,236 Emergency Medical Responses (9 EMS calls per day average) requiring 2,129 patients transported to the hospital. Our agency runs a 3 ambulance rotation from Fire Headquarters on Rt 28 in West Dennis, plus a spare ambulance in reserve for ambulances requiring to be placed out of service for an extended period. The EMS response for Station 2 on the Northside and it’s associated issues were explained in the prior section of **Staffing; Northside Ambulance Inequity Issue.**

The state of ambulance equipment and supplies for responders is described by members as adequate, updated and good to above average. The annual Medical & Supply appropriation for the Operating Budget is \$ 92,000, which includes funding for CIEMS and service contracts to maintain all the Medtronics products and stretchers. In a general sense, this has been sufficient for the departments EMS needs. Our ambulances are inspected annually by the State Office of Emergency Medical Services to ensure compliance with State regulations. Our medications and drug supplies are closely monitored and inventoried. Ambulances are checked at least twice during a 24 hour period and are restocked after being cleaned and decontaminated after each call. Another big priority of the department is replacing each ambulance Life-Pak defibrillator monitors, which is being addressed through our Capital Replacement plan.

The condition of the fire department ambulance fleet is considered above average. In the past 8 years, the Town has committed to a proactive ambulance replacement program, where one of the three front ambulances is replaced every other year. The result of the program generally

has each outgoing ambulance no more than 6-7 years old and about 120,000 miles when retired.

At the writing of this report, the Board of Selectmen has endorsed a 1 year trial program of keeping the most recently retired ambulance in a “reserved” status as a spare, should one of the 3 front line ambulances go down for a prolonged period. This program was supported to maintain efficient service to the community while maximizing ambulance revenue receipts for our service. It is hoped the program will be endorsed at the conclusion of the trial period.

Training within the EMS program receives the highest priority. Required recertification, remedial and refresher training are accomplished mostly on duty within the shift assignments. Unfortunately, we have found that due to the emergency call activity when training commences, the EMS training outlines and segments are often fractured and is hard to maintain consistency. During the last fiscal year, the department authorized a minimum level of off-duty training overtime in order to address the training standards and we have found this process to be much more effective in helping to meet our training recertification goals. The amount of additional training costs was approximately \$ 18,500 for 411 hours. This commitment needs to be continued in order to maintain our EMS standards of excellence.

Also discussed and dissected at length during the Strategic Planning process was the Dennis Fire Departments staffing levels on various types of emergency calls. As required by the Ambulance regulations and the Affiliate Medical Director, each call that our units are dispatched for are classified as a priority 1, priority 2 or a priority 3 call for emergency medical aid. This is based on the nature of the information received from the caller. In a general sense, a priority 1 call is the most critical or life threatening (ie: heart attacks, not breathing, head injuries, severe bleeding ect) and a priority 3, the least severe or non-life threatening (ie: broken leg, strains or sprains, bloody nose, minor respiratory issues ect). Consideration of reduced manpower requirements for more priority 2 and some priority 3 calls were compared to the industry standards in other fire departments and in the private ambulance industry. After more careful review, we found that our protocols for Dennis Fire to sending a third care giver where some agencies would send only 2, was not that far from the normal standard of care. In case after case, personnel gave examples of responding to a reported priority 2 call finding a priority 1 patient on arrival. It is a much improved and efficient level of care responding as we do with a third person, rather than calling for more help later which would cause a delay of care & transport. Another clear and convincing argument to keep our present model of staffing is the extremely low volume of injuries to responding firefighters for pulls, strains and exposures to infectious fluids.

This exercise in critically reviewing our staffing strategies for EMS calls, was found to still be consistent with the 2000 Management Study of the Dennis Fire Department by DMG Maximus of Waltham, Massachusetts. In that study, 12 years ago, related to this very issue, it stated as follow:

Using 3 firefighters on certain priority calls- “This is an unusual, though effective practice and should be continued”.

A number of today’s professional fire departments have embraced the emergency medical field as their new paradigm, especially during the 1980’s. Communities today that have a fire based EMS system have found overlap with the dual role as firefighter & EMS provider to be very efficient and cost effective for the municipalities. Very few communities that have had a fire based EMS system will go backwards to a private EMS system. This is particularly true on Cape Cod. Once one travels over either Cape bridges from the mainland, they can be assured of top quality Advanced Life Safety care from Bourne to Provincetown. Dennis was one of the leaders on the Cape with fire department medical services dating back to 1939.



Emergency Medical Service Coordinator Position

The EMS division is overseen by the Deputy Chief of Operations. The current EMS Coordinator position is filled by Firefighter/Paramedic John Adelizzi, who also works as a regular shift firefighter, reporting to the Deputy. Responsibilities include planning, directing and administering the EMS program for the department. Some of the tasks include:

- Preparing and submitting recommendations on policy and budget means
- Evaluates and gives periodic reports on qualifications and performance of personnel
- Maintenance and purchase of equipment and supplies
- Responsible for training and documentation, including certifications
- Maintains statistics on EMS incidents and operations regarding treatment and care
- Ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing EMS
- Reviews Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement Program of EMS calls
- Coordinates with Federal, State and Cape and Islands EMS agencies
- Communicates information for EMS to department personnel
- Assigned as the Infection Control Officer
- Adherence to OEMS required training modules and remedial guidance
- State Certified Instructor/Coordinator and AHA Instructor

This position has it's own pay classification within the Firefighter bargaining agreement and all work done outside of the regular shift assignments are done on overtime. FY'11 overtime for the EMS coordinator was approximately \$ 36,000 in addition to his regular firefighter salary.

With today's complexities and demands placed on this position, the hours needed off duty to fulfill all the above tasks and responsibilities listed previously, combined with the cost in overtime to fulfill the needs, the EMS supervisor role could be much more efficient being a daytime staff position, Monday- Friday. Placing this position on days has been brought forward a number of times but has not been funded. This should continue to be a goal of the EMS program into the future. In the meantime, it should be stated that department members have a great deal of faith, confidence and trust with Firefighter Adelizzi and how he carries out his responsibilities. That same appreciation is shared by department administration.

Electronic Emergency Medical System Reporting

The computerization of our ambulance reports has led to improved efficiencies in our scene & incident documentation. The system is designed for click on prompts and auto fill entries in reports, reducing down time at the hospitals and repeat issues with frequent patients and their medications. The system provides for electronic transmittal to our ambulance billing company vs sending all reports manually by mail. We often have had problems with legibility of paper reports and completeness of the documents. The system demands and prompts to ensure the Medics are following the proper protocol for the Advanced Medical Standards we mandate. The system was approved for the FY'11 Capital Budget for the Fire Department.

After a request for bid proposal, Emergidata Corp. of Richardson, Texas was selected as the vendor for the project. Phase 1 of the project began the setup of department data and computerization for each of our Department Ambulances and the Station 2 Advanced Life support Engine. Phase 2 of the project involved the bid for hardware and installation. Phase 3 dealt with training and trial usage and Phase 4 was the full implementation in the fall of 2011.

The new computerization program, while successful, still has not reached it's maximum potential with its ability to interface with the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system at Barnstable County Fire Dispatch who performs our fire and EMS dispatch services. As the County and Fire dispatch systems are built out in the relatively short term, this issue should improve and remains as a future goal. In addition, consistency must be maintained with our off-site mainframe with Emergidata, to make sure it reports our data properly to the Massachusetts State Data reporting system (referred to as MATRIS).

These issues will continue as an objective with the Department Computer Technology Committee and Administration.



Dennis Fire Department Ambulance Fund

Purpose & Scope

In 1994, Town Meeting voted under Article 19, that the Town establish an ambulance user fee and authorized the Board of Selectmen to revise such fee, as needed, subject to the limitations of the Selectmen's Fee Limitation By-Law; and, further, to authorize the establishment of a Reserve for Appropriation account to be used to defray the cost, including maturing debt and interest, of purchasing, hiring, maintaining and operating ambulances.

5 Year History of Fund

The following is a 5 year historical breakdown of the Ambulance Fund receipts and how much was appropriated into the Operations side of the budget as compared to the Capital expenses.

Ambulance Receipts

<u>Fiscal Yr</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Operating/Capital</u>
> 2007	1,200,216	850,000	Personal Ser.	Operating
> 2008	1,197,600	950,000	Personal Ser.	Operating
		167,000	Ambulance	Capital
> 2009	1,113,866	1,025,000	Personal Ser.	Operating
> 2010	1,174,350	1,100,000	Personal Ser.	Operating
		170,482	Ambulance	Capital
> 2011	1,178,115	1,075,000	Personal Ser.	Operating
	_____	<u>79,555</u>	Ambulance	Capital
5 Year Totals=	5,864,152	5,417,037		

**Ambulance Fund Expended
2007-2011
(Operating vs. Capital)**



Trends and Appropriations

The Ambulance Fund shows the appropriation side has historically favored offsetting the fire department salary and overtime accounts in the Operating budget. There have been slightly more funds dedicated to Capital projects in the more recent years, as indicated above, however **94%** has been allocated to the Operating budget in the five year span of 2007-2011.

There have been no predictable funds set aside for other purposes and it has been a year by year decision on what to set aside for Operating Costs vs Capital projects. For the period 2003-2006 (prior to the 5 year table above), the Ambulance Fund expended back \$ 3,432,716 or approximately **97%** back to the Operating Budget under Salaries & Overtime.

While no judgments are made on how Ambulance receipts are expended, the history shows we are fortunate that we have been able to offset some of our costs that it takes to run a professional ambulance service, while still staying within the intent of the Ambulance Fund scope, as set by Town Meeting in 1994.

Marine Operations

The fire department has a marine program that has proved beneficial on the waterways over the years, resulting in rescues and assistance of all types on the Cape Cod Bay, Nantucket Sound and the riverways and tributaries where people visit and congregate. Our boat inventory is as follows:

Boat 117 – Trailered at Headquarters

17' Boston Whaler
75 hp Honda 4 stroke motor
w/registered boat trailer

Boat 118 – Docked South at Bass River Marina for Nantucket Sound

25' SAFE Brand Rescue Boat
Twin 185 hp JP Optimax motors
w/registered boat trailer

Boat 119 – Docked North at Sesuit Harbor for Bay Side Area

23' Boston Whaler
200 hp Mercury 2 stroke motors
w/registered boat trailer

Our role in the harbors and waterways are a team effort. Our responses are coordinated with the Dennis Harbormaster, Dennis Police, US Coast Guard and bordering fire departments and harbormasters. When there is a reported emergency or problem on the water, the response is a collective one and the closest agency will often arrive within just a few minutes, depending on conditions. The Dennis Fire Department provides emergency 24/7 coverage with 2 boats already in the water during most of the season. One boat is always trailered inside at fire headquarters on Rt 28. during the colder winter period for emergency response if the situation dictates. The fire department works with the Harbormaster, who has jurisdictional control of the Dennis Harborways in the Town.

The cost of the program to the Town is minimal. The boats and trailers have been obtained through the Commonwealths DCR surplus equipment program at no charge. Some examples of costs are some usual maintenance costs, lettering and painting and during the summer months, approximately 50 gallons of fuel, total between the Harbor and the Sound.

The Dennis Fire Association has donated a tremendous amount of funds and in kind services to the program, local vendors have provided in kind services for minor work done in the past and the Bass River Marina, annually donate a slip from which to base our boat on the Sound.

One area of improvement and concern is with the radio communications while operating on the water when trying to talk with the Dennis Harbormaster. Fire operates on the 400mhz and 800mhz public safety band. Although the Harbormaster has the same radios and bands as public safety, he chooses to only communicate with units on marine channel 66. The problem with our units switching over to the marine channel is it puts them out of contact with the shore based fire commanders and the police dept. Fire has the capability to monitor all the channels, including 66 and often goes up on Channel 66 to communicate directly to the Coast Guard and Harbormaster if truly needed. A solution to this issue needs to be agreed upon in order to improve communications.

All the donations, services and the relatively small Town investment allows for rapid response on the waters for our citizens and visitors as well as provides for the safety of our trained personnel who operate the vessels.

Specialty Rescue Operations

Included under this category are the functions of our role in Dive Rescue, Technical Rescue and Hazardous Materials responses. These operations require specialty training hours for a particular rescue function and requiring the use of highly technical and specialized tools and equipment. The training and equipment costs for a single Fire Department to gear up for and maintain for all possible scenarios for Specialty Rescue Operations are cost prohibitive for one Town to absorb. Dennis Fire has joined all Cape Towns under a mutual aid and collaborative venture to form a regional or district wide response to any of these given scenarios. Currently, all requests for specialized rescue requests are made through the Barnstable County Mutual System, via Barnstable County Control. The call for assistance is placed to the particular team leader(s) on call and fanned out as needed for that particular need as described below.

Dive Team Response

The Dennis Fire Department has an eight member Dive Team, who receive specialized training in the areas of underwater search and rescue, underwater recovery operations and ice rescue diving. This eight member team is called upon throughout the year to respond to suspected persons missing in the water.

The current members of the Dennis Dive rescue team are:

- Lieutenant Kent
- Firefighter Raspante
- Firefighter Tobin
- Firefighter C. Conlon
- Firefighter Heirholcer
- Firefighter Anderson
- Lieutenant Perry
- Firefighter O'Connell

The Dive Team has the arduous task of searching the surrounding underwater area of any water incident to determine if in fact there has been an unfortunate drowning. Due to the inherent risks in these types of operations, these incidents require a large number of personnel to safely conduct a search. The Dennis Fire Department is a participating member of the Mid Cape Dive Team. The Mid Cape Dive Team is a collaboration of several surrounding communities who respond personnel and equipment to support such incidents. For the Dive Team members to safely perform underwater, they must spend many hours to become a certified diver. Once certified to dive, members must maintain their skills annually by participating in training and mock exercises setup through the Mid Cape Dive Team system.

Dennis allocates \$ 2,000 annually for minor maintenance, repair and upkeep to dive equipment out of the Fire operating budget. The department maintains a 1990 GMC Dive Rescue truck (Truck 116), out of headquarters for response.

It is obvious a large number of requests for emergency services in the region involve water based incidents such as water rescues, ice rescues, and body and evidence recovery events. Recognizing that the fire departments across Cape Cod are the main provider of this service the Barnstable County Fire Chiefs Association recently secured \$240,000 in Homeland Security grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop and equip a regional dive team capable of responding to the incidents described above.

This dive team, is an operational component of the Technical Rescue Team and will utilize the grant monies to purchase \$180,000 in equipment and train 40 firefighters in the required dive certifications. When fully trained and equipped the dive team will utilize the same deployment plan (Upper/Lower Cape) used by the Technical Rescue team. The goal is to have the regional dive team in service by the summer of 2013.

Technical Rescue Response

In early 2012 a group of Cape Cod Fire Chiefs acknowledged the need to develop and maintain a regional team of firefighters capable of responding to emergency incidents involving confined space rescues, high/low angle rope rescues, building collapses, and trench rescue events. While these types of incidents occur with low frequency the results usually end tragically when the response does not include adequately trained and equipped firefighters.

Recognizing that the development of these teams on an individual department basis would be unattainable due to budgetary constraints the Barnstable County Fire Chiefs developed and implemented a regional response program using funds provided through a federal government Homeland Security Grant Program managed on a local level by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The approximately \$350,000 in monies secured through the grant provided funding to train and equip 45 firefighters from across the Cape in the technical rescue disciplines identified above.

The team resources are divided into two regions identified as Upper and Lower Cape. Response resources in each area encompass a trailer that includes a variety of technical rescue equipment, generators, and other support gear. One of these mobile units is housed at the Brewster Fire Department and one at the Sandwich Fire Department. Team staffing is also divided into two separate groups of approximately 20 members each. The team is activated through the request of the local Incident Commander to the Barnstable County Dispatch Center.

The group is directed through an Executive Board that includes the President of the Barnstable County Fire Chiefs Association and three other Fire Chiefs. They are responsible for the administration and overall operation of the team. Four Fire Chiefs serve as Task Force Leaders under the operational component of the team. These Task Force Leaders are responsible for responding to emergency incidents and coordinating team operations under a unified incident action plan developed by the local Incident Commander.

Hazardous Materials Response

All requests for a Fire Department response to a hazardous materials emergency in Dennis, becomes a Regional Hazardous Materials Response.

In 1982, Massachusetts governmental officials created a task force to investigate the most uniform and cost effective way to address Hazardous Materials Emergency Response. It was determined that a regionalized approach to response would be most effective. The Commonwealth was then divided into six regions, by fire district, and a response team was staffed for each of the six districts.

This Regional Hazardous Materials Response Program is an innovative response system designed to provide specialized response of personnel and equipment to the 351 communities of the Commonwealth, to enable us to protect the public, the environment and property during incidents involving a release or potential release of hazardous materials. Hazardous Materials are the leak, spill or escape of any material or substance where it is flammable, combustive, corrosive or a threat to life through inhalation or absorption through the skin. Often times, Hazardous Materials incidents are prolonged due to stabilization efforts and for the protection of firefighters and the public.

The six Regional Response Teams are strategically located for a maximum of a 1 hour response anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Regional Teams support local Fire Departments with technical information and specialized equipment. Of the six districts, Cape Cod is part of District 1. There are 5 levels of response within each district on a Tier level system:

- Tier 1- Hazardous and Risk Assessment
- Tier 2- Short Term Operations
- Tier 3- Long Term Operations
- Tier 4- Multi District Response
- Tier 5- WMD/Mass Contamination

The size, scope and complexity of a hazardous material incident in Dennis or any community, will escalate or de-escalate, depending on the chemical or hazard and the potential of the entire scene presented.

Health & Safety

Members indicate a desire to start a working committee to implement a Health & Safety Committee to oversee and ensure the safety of it's membership. The Committee would be responsible for developing and managing a risk management plan for the department. The plan would include safety for the facilities, department training, apparatus, equipment and protective equipment. Other ideas for the committee are to review areas of infection control and incident stress. The Chief has indicated a desire to review workplace injuries and institute steps for improvement. Safety is a critical issue that our employees wish to have input and participation in. It was envisioned this committee would report to the Deputy Chief of Operations.

Firefighter Safety on the Fireground

There are two insights to firefighter safety on the fireground. One is from the management perspective on what is sufficient, operationally feasible and cost effective. The second insight is from the labor force or the men & woman on the street, in how they feel about their safety in an overall sense combined with their policies and procedures. The best safety program in a fire department is one where both of these insights and goals can be combined. Dennis Fire management as well as the firefighters themselves, feel that firefighter safety is very good in Dennis but there is always room for improvement. Our workplace injury record is extremely positive with very few firefighter injuries for the call volume and work activity of our department. The past 3 years of on-the-job firefighter injuries in Dennis are as follows:

2009- 16

2010- 15

2011- 12

Most all these injuries have been strains or pains of various types, a few minor burns and few have required long term hospitalization by our members. Our policies require full protective gear to be worn at incidents involving hazardous environments and our supervisors monitor safety standards and issues with diligence. Our individual firefighter surveys, when asked how members feel about their safety on the fireground, mirrored their comments at the department meeting, that they feel safe and we have good systems in place.

Some of the individual survey comments for improvement on safety were:

- Lack of manpower needs to be addressed
- There is still some free lancing at fires that needs to be controlled better
- Feel we go overboard with the use of safety vests on our roadway incidents
- 3 responders on most EMS calls adds to firefighter safety and injury reductions
- Feels safety can depend on the officer in charge...need better consistency
- We need to emphasize the use and training of the Incident Command System tags
- Need to guard against complacency

As stated previously under **Health & Safety**, members feel we should reinstitute a department safety committee to review our status on these and other on-going safety issues that may come up and report back their recommendations. In addition, management desires to institute an action plan with review of workplace injuries with our insurance carrier to set out improvements in the long term.

Department Training

Training in the Dennis Fire organization has been defined as being good by our most of our members overall, however Administration see this area as one needing improvement and reinforcement in certain areas. Fire and EMS training and all it involves is an ever changing focus. As our mission evolves and changes, so does our need to refocus on areas to improve.

Our Training program is ripe for improvement and must be a major goal in our Strategic Plan. While the past current fiscal year has seen a significant increase in training hours for Emergency Medical overtime training, more efforts have also been focused to a better balance of fire related training opportunities as well. Overall, training overtime for members in FY'12 saw an increase of 24% over the same period of FY'11.

All new fulltime firefighters are now invested into the Massachusetts Firefighter 12 week program at Stow, within the first year of employment. The Departments focus on hiring in the past couple years and into the short term have been in hiring certified Paramedics. Once the new firefighters are on board, members feel we should enter into a time specified program where the new firefighters have a chance to work on a rotation with all groups to get better acclimated to the department. During this period as well, the new firefighters should be furnished with a Town of Dennis Employee handbook, our Standard operating guidelines and the union bargaining agreement as part of an employee orientation program. The firefighters support this endeavor as well as this administration.

One concern of a number of our members is to review and possibly modify the department promotional policy. Although this promotional process is tied to the bargaining agreement, it is felt by some to have lessened the standard for training and preparedness for future officers. This is not a sentiment shared by all in the organization. The promotional process has been changed a number of times over the course of many years. The Fire Chief's concern is that the organization needs to set course on a promotional policy that is not only fair to all but that will survive the test of time and not be changed every few years. This needs to receive some major focus and attention in order to keep credibility for our promotional process. It should be noted here that all the fire officers promoted with either testing format, have been top caliber supervisors that have served their positions well.

A mentoring program also needs to be looked at for the future development of fire officers and supervisors. The Department, with the support of the Dennis Fire Association, has sponsored two nationally acclaimed leadership and development seminars over the past few years for the full department, including opening up these seminars to outside fire departments. These department seminars bring in fresh ideas and perspectives into our agency and have proved to be popular with our firefighters.

Firefighters have also stressed a goal for training that should be to bring in a number of outside instructors into our company level or daily training from a more local level, including, gas and electrical professionals, building and construction experts and other trades professionals who can share their level of knowledge with us on a practical basis.

Members enjoy the opportunity to participate in live fire training at the Barnstable County Fire Training Academy in Barnstable. Many wish to continue that opportunity within our training program.

Firefighter driver training, such as the one delivered this past spring where firefighters received significant classroom time and practical driving evolutions and training on our major pieces of equipment. In a final report issued to the Fire Chief's Office dated August 10, 2012, Emergency Vehicle Operational Strategies Inc. (EVOG), issued a final summary and recommendations on the conclusion of their 5 day program (*Appendix G*). A major recommendation that was issued was to implement an annual refresher program for driver training.

One of the most important areas of on-going and needed training is for maintaining our Advanced Life Support and Emergency Medical Training certification levels for Paramedics and EMT's.

On-going company level training by our current Emergency Medical Coordinator is a well balanced approach with most that can be done on duty and those requiring attendance on off duty hours. The EMS Coordinator has a good rapport, trust and confidence by members of the duty shifts and with this administration, as he carries out the EMS training component.

It is a supported notion shared by all that EMS training can be improved even better than it is delivered now, should the position of the EMS coordinator be placed on a day schedule instead of being a member of a duty shift. This is discussed in further detail in another section of this plan.

A valuable tool in the training of our EMS standards has been the development of a QA/QI (Quality Analysis/Quality Improvement) program which is overseen by the EMS coordinator. This program is a critical review of what our members are doing in the field, targeting areas on how to improve our patient treatment and built into to training program back to members. For example, on any given months, we will pull a sign and symptom of all calls pertaining to a certain injury. One month could be respiratory arrest another month could be the administering of a certain drug or medicine. We will pull all the reports pertaining that type of symptom and review our protocols against areas we see as needed for training and improvement.

The firefighters desire to keep up on the basics of firefighting such as hose, ladders, pumps, driver training, vehicle extrication and rescue, strategy and tactics and the nuts and bolts of that facet of their jobs. With that and the ever increasing and complex demands of maintaining their EMS certifications and training, there is plenty on which to keep our focus on in our fire training program into the future. Training remains a top objective for continuous review to maintain firefighter safety and protect the public we serve.



Leadership and Readiness-

This fire department is fortunate to have personnel with excellent leadership skills who understand today's need for accountability, integrity and leading by example. The Assistant Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief are highly trained in today's modern fire practices and personnel development and as such, provide support to personnel on a daily basis. The Fire Officers and Firefighters overall, are highly motivated to attend and participate in further training for Leadership and Readiness topics. They have the skill set and desire for further training to develop those leadership traits that will take them into the future. There are many within our ranks that are to become the future leaders of this department and the fire administration and the Town must continue to support these programs at all levels, to include increased funding. As discussed previously, the department has supported two major leadership seminars, both by nationally recognized fire department speakers in 2006 and in 2012. Both seminars were well attended by personnel from Dennis and other area fire departments. Speakers not only encouraged our people to look at nationally accepted practices but to not be afraid to look outside the box and our culture to meet today's fire service demands. The talent of our personnel, their attitude and their motivation is a great asset for future readiness for in-house promotions. The Fire Chief and the Town Administrator have been discussing a transition plan and Town options as the Chief considers any upcoming retirement plans. It is desired that a planned change in leadership and transition for the Fire Department must involve the Town and its Firefighters with the goal to be as seamless as practically possible.

New Firefighter Orientation Program-

When a new full-time firefighter comes on board, he/she is assigned to one particular Captain on a particular group, depending on where the need is for either a paramedic, EMT or a trained firefighter. Usually that person is already trained at the Barnstable County level 1-2 firefighter level for the basics in firefighting but not every time. Essentially, the firefighter then works on the one group, learning on the job about our department, our policies and procedures and the exposure to other personnel can be a slow process due to the firefighters work schedule. There is no comprehensive program for new firefighters to gain the same knowledge as others who had been hired. Discussions and feedback by personnel indicate a need to develop an orientation program for new hires with a checklist of information to be provided on a consistent basis. The firefighter would be assigned to several weeks of day shifts at the start of their employment where they would be exposed to personnel on all four groups, receive the same briefings on policies and regulations, the bargaining agreement, training standards and general information. This orientation program would help in the new employee gaining a wider sense of what is to be expected in their new position, get them to meet their fellow firefighters easier and to be more consistent in the bigger picture for future employees.

Communication (flow of information/dissemination)

One of the biggest issues facing personnel in the department at the start of this current administration was internal communications and how information was going out and coming in. Issues identified were personnel not being kept abreast of matters in a timely fashion, Station 2 members seemed left out of the loop from Station 1 personnel and there were conflicting and outdated policies, general orders and procedures accounting for a lack of accountability. Pertinent department information was posted in multiple locations and firefighters and supervisors reporting not being engaged in decision making and being allowed meaningful input. The following actions were developed to help improve department communications and helping people to become engaged:

- New fax machine for Station 2, enabling all memos that are posted at headquarters, to go out the same time to Station 2.
- Monthly Fire Officers and Supervisors meeting on the third Tuesday of each month.
- Creation of a Department Standard Operating Guideline Manual broken into two sections, Routine Operation and Emergency Operations. All policies are sent out for draft review for 14 days before being adopted.
- Implemented an Informational Memo system where general information is disseminated, posted and destroyed after 30 days, unless developed as policy.
- All department related business, including policy drafts, informational memos, letters and general information is posted in one place in each station on a black clipboard where all personnel can see the same information when reporting for duty.

On the firefighter surveys and general meeting discussions, most report that communications have improved significantly. Much discussion centered on the need to take advantage of technology and allowing members to be able to keep abreast of issues when not at work and from remote places. Better use of texting capabilities should be explored for off duty members. Increased interest in the E-Cloud capabilities, allowing department postings to be entered on-line and members being allowed to check their mailbox from the web, has good interest from members. Some criticism from firefighters are that while communications have increased, some members need to read the Station clipboards more frequently. Also, at times, there are some supervisors that interpret issues differently when passing information onto their personnel. Another concern of some is that upper management staff seem to be on different pages at times. For example, some have noted that when the Fire Chief speaks to a concern or issue, sometime members of his staff may give the appearance they are not on the same page or may have a different interpretation. This needs to be bolstered and kept in check in order to strengthen communications into the future and is the Fire Chief's responsibility.

Management/Labor Relations

Overall, our firefighters have indicated they are pleased with the relationship between management and labor. While at times, there may be a difference how each side see an issue, the general feeling is the union feels they can approach the Chief's Office, with the sense they can be heard. Consequently, positive working relationships can only reside where the same sentiment is felt by management. The Chief's Office feels the same about raising issues on the other side. In a general sense, while the Union does not run the Dennis Fire Department, it has a great deal of participation, input and ownership into the success of our organization. Discussions and issues can be debated and be controversial at times between labor and management but when the smoke clears, decisions are made on the balance of what is in the best interest for the fire department and the Town of Dennis. Great emphasis is placed on keeping internal issues within our department without spilling into the public arena. There have been minimal union grievances filed in the past 8 years and more so based on Town issues and not directly against fire department management. The Chief has always held a philosophy that will support a fair and decent working agreement for the firefighters. The philosophy is that fair wages, a competitive benefit structure and decent working conditions will attract and retain the best firefighters, paramedics and EMT's available. This is important to the Town overall as well as its fire department.

Department Morale

Dennis firefighters overall have indicated they share a belief that department morale is positive and that members feel empowered to make decisions on a daily basis. They have indicated by a large number, that they feel they can offer input and feedback in a constructive way, which leaves them with their fingerprint on the organization, in a positive sense. On the anonymous employee surveys, when asked to grade department morale on a scale from A-F, firefighters responded with all A's & B's of different levels, 3 gave a C and one indicated a D/E. When asked what steps or actions were needed to improve morale, several indicated that with certain personnel changes and succession through the ranks with others, that all else being equal, morale could improve even better.

Morale issues can be hard to evaluate. At times individual morale represent the moment or the times and can be affected by outside factors from day to day. In an organizational sense, personnel have indicated we do pretty well in this area at the moment. Department morale should be constantly monitored and not be a result of one of two issues. It should be the more general result of a positive working environment where employees are empowered, equipped and supported.

Overall- How do you feel about this department ? (people, equipment)

This was one question asked on the individual personnel surveys, where the employee could retain their anonymity while having the chance to offer constructive criticism or other input. Member were asked about how they feel about the state of their department overall using a scale of A-F.

74 % of the employees showed a rating of either A+ or A.

25 % of the employees showed a rating of a B+ or B.

1 % of the employees showed a rating of C or below

Written comments seemed to confirm how they feel about the state of their department, our people and it's equipment. This seemed to be followed up on the 4 Group Meetings later on in the process.

Comments centered on their thoughts that overall, they enjoy good working conditions, they feel involved and feel appreciated in the community as well as by the Town. A number commented on the sentiment that they have a good reputation and work well with other area Cape Departments. Several indicated they believe we have some good equipment and have made good strides in apparatus updates as well. Another theme of the comments mentioned that we need to increase the number of paramedics in the department and a couple noted we have been hiring good people. It should be noted that while all agree we have a lot we can work on as a department, that no negative comments were found in this section in any of the individual surveys.

Committees & Projects

In a general sense, there is agreement that there never seems to be a lack of participation and desire to work on meaningful projects and committees within the department. Examples of committee work and assignments range from truck, ambulance or vehicle committees, Patient Care Reporting Committee (Ambulance Computers), equipment committees of various types and the newly established Computer technology committee, are just a few sample of some of the projects that personnel wish to involve themselves in. This type of involvement empowers people to have input in their job, tools and equipment they utilize each day. Although, virtually all these committee assignments have been done at no cost to the Town, it is recognized that more and more department projects with committee assignments vary in their time commitment outside normal working hours.

Some members have suggested consideration of a small stipend for those project assignments that require larger amounts of time or resources. This stipend process is said to be used in some other Town departments, Cape and other off Cape Fire departments and other agencies.

Overall, the involvement and participation levels of fire department employees are indicative of the positive culture within the agency at present and should be continued to be highly supported and maintained where possible.

Awards and Recognition

When personnel do an exceptional job or go beyond that asked of them, the current administration and leadership will often show thanks by a handshake, pat on the back, a letter for their file or recognition in front of their peers when appropriate. That is and has always been the culture of the fire service in general and Dennis Fire in particular.

At this time, firefighters do not wish to take part in regular periodic awards presentations especially for the medical aid incidents and normal firefighting functions, for which, is their primary job and responsibilities. However, there is agreement there may be special occasions where such recognition would be warranted. There may be times, either off the job or for exceptional performance over and above their job that we may want to publicly acknowledge those accomplishments. Administration and personnel agree that we have no internal process to trigger awards and recognition when a job is not only well done but exceptional and noteworthy. Some feedback indicate an interest in forming an informal awards and recognition program to ensure that exceptional performance is awarded and recognized when deserved. The Fire Chief and Administration strongly support this concept.

Values and Rules of Conduct

The values that any organization can truly claim, is often found within the manner of how they conduct themselves on a regular basis and by which of what they expect from those who work alongside of them. Our department rules of conduct form the basis of what the members of the Dennis Fire Department expect from each other. A copy of the Fire Departments Rules of Conduct is included in *Appendix C*.

This document outlines the values we live by and the conduct expected of us at all times.

Computer Technology

Currently, the Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention & Investigation has computers and technology under his area of responsibility. Our members seek a working committee of department members with the goal of looking at the technology issues surrounding the many facts of our computer uses and functions, in the stations, our computer aided dispatch functions at our County Fire Alarm and the reporting systems in place in our Emergency Medical Services on the street in our ambulances. The members as of this date that have volunteered to be on this committee are:

- Captain Rick Farrenkopf-Chair
- Firefighter Brian Dunton
- Firefighter Jeff Larkowski
- Firefighter Brian Kelly
- Firefighter Ben Anderson
- Firefighter Tim Chicoine

This committee will report to the Assistant Fire Chief.

Insurance Service Office (ISO Rating)

Insurance Services Office Inc. (ISO), collects and evaluates information from communities in the United States on their structure fire suppression capabilities. Areas that are reviewed and evaluated are:

- Fire Alarms & Communications Systems
- The Fire Department
- The Water System

On a rating scale of a Class 1-10, with 1 meaning exemplary fire suppression capabilities, the lower ISO rating means reduced fire insurance rates, all things being equal.

The Town of Dennis ISO rating is a Class 3 as scored in 2010.

Fire Dispatch-

On November 4, 2008, the Town entered into contract with the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office to provide Fire and Emergency Medical dispatching for the Dennis Fire Department. The history of moving dispatching services out of the Fire Department and to the County was disputed by and not supported by the Fire Department, at the time, for a host of reasons.

The Town's decision was based on a financial savings in overtime of almost \$ 200,000 per year with the County's cost of about \$ 100,000 and the net savings to the Town about \$ 100,000 per year. With the decision made, the firefighters overall have moved on and remained as positive as can be, in the transition. Subsequent work was undertaken by staff to help ensure the new system would serve them as well as possible. In our meetings in this strategic planning process, it was clear that while many of their issues have been realized, such as loss of control of how we can respond, to the empty station matter, to customer service concerns, that overall they made their adjustments accordingly. This is a reflection of the professionalism of the firefighters as to who they are and what they represent to the Town.

The current fire department concerns that have been raised through meetings and surveys involve a "system" problem with the Public Safety Answering System (referred to as PSAP) and how fire department 911 calls are taken, processed and dispatched. We also are not able to take full advantage of the features of an effective Emergency Medical Dispatching (referred to as EMD) process, due to our 911 call taking system.

The PSAP Issue- In a number of States, there is only one Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for all the communities in the State, for Police, Fire and Ambulance emergency calls to go into. Simply, the emergency call taker immediately directs your emergency call to the Town agency for dispatching it's units to the emergency. On Cape Cod as well as other communities around Massachusetts, there are multiple PSAPs depending on the community. Some are in regional call taking centers, some are in police departments and a very few are in local fire departments. The Massachusetts 911 commission has long been a proponent of consolidating and reducing the number of PSAPs around the Commonwealth.

In Dennis, when someone calls 911 from a hard-wired phone, the call goes to the Dennis Police Department Communications Center. The Police Communications Specialist will ask the caller for the nature of their emergency and determine if they are calling for police, fire or ambulance. In the general nature of the conversation, the caller will describe their emergency and often their location to the police call taker. If the caller is calling for a fire or an ambulance, the caller is then transferred to the Barnstable County Dispatch Center, where they have to repeat all their information to a second call taker at County.

At times, the caller can be so excited, they often think they were hung up on as there is a slight delay in the transfer between Police and County Fire. This whole process is compounded even worse, should one call from a cell phone for fire or ambulance emergencies. If you call for a Dennis Fire or Medical emergency, you will now need to repeat your emergency to three (3) call takers, each with a slight pause in between transfers of calls.

The first one to answer your Dennis 911 call for Fire or Ambulance is a State Police Dispatcher, probably in Framingham, MA. After you state what Town you need, then the nature of your emergency (and sometimes your address), you are asked to hold for Dennis Emergency while your call is transferred. After a small delay, you end up talking with the Dennis Police Communications Specialist, such as described earlier and once again transferred to County Fire Dispatch.

A number of callers have indicated their frustration at the 911 process in Dennis, having to explain their emergency to three people for fire and ambulance calls. This process delays fire and ambulance calls in Dennis. In addition, very often, Dennis Fire personnel will be monitoring Town government and Police channels and will hear Dennis Police dispatching cruisers to a Fire or Ambulance call and frequently it can be up to a minute or even two minutes in some cases before our Fire Department is toned out to respond by County Fire. Again, this is a system issue and not a negative Police attitude or cooperation issue. As the Dennis Police Dispatcher is moving a fire or ambulance call to County Fire, they are obviously ascertaining the nature of the call for possible police needs or response. That combined with the call taking time of the transfer to County and their whole process at that location, the Police will already be responding and often times, be on the scene well before our units are even alerted. Clearly, by adding County Fire as additional step in our PSAP process, it has further delayed many of our total response times. With time being our most critical ally, this is the nature of the PSAP system problem for the Fire Department as set up in Dennis.

Another problem which was raised by staff regarding the switch to County Fire dispatching and the PSAP process, was the loss of the fire departments internal monitoring of the 911 calls as they took place in real time. Before the switch to County, on-duty personnel in both stations could monitor, via speakers, the actual fire or medical call which gave them a sense of the emergency or pending situation for which they were about to encounter. This helped supervisors determine a better level of response and an improved level of situational awareness. The department was informed by the phone company that once the Police transfer line was switched from the Fire Department to County Fire for dispatching, we were no longer able to provide this service to our firefighters. One senior level officer in the department feels going back to that system may be antiquated, not cost effective and that personnel hearing the emergency caller may not be in our personnel's best interest in determining response levels. However, the department overall, has indicated a desire to re-visit this issue with the objective to reinstate the 911 speaker system in both stations. In doing so, they will review the positives as well as the negative ramifications before attempting to reinstate the system back.

The Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Issue

EMD is the process of a trained medical dispatcher that answers the 911 call and staying on the line with the caller with a life threatening medical situation. Some examples are for heart attacks, difficulty breathing, severe bleeding or other trauma, where basic instructions to the caller are being given, often while the dispatch of the medical units in the field is taking place simultaneously by another dispatcher. The EMD dispatcher has a set of protocols they attempt to walk the caller through until the arrival of paramedics and EMT's, for live saving actions they can take while waiting for fire department medics. The critical issue needed to properly carry out the EMD dispatching scenario is for the 911 call to go directly to the 911 dispatch point for the ambulance and medical responders. In the Dennis case, the ultimate flow of this 911 medical call should go directly to the Barnstable County Fire Dispatch Center, who dispatch for the Fire Department. The whole intent is for the caller not to be transferred from one agency to another, while trying to give the nature of the emergency, sometime in a panic stricken mode. Currently as previously stated under the 911 call taking process, a caller by cell phone requesting an ambulance for a serious trauma patient, must first be answered by Mass State Police in Framingham, then transferred to the Dennis PSAP at the Dennis Police Station, then the caller is transferred to the Barnstable County Fire Dispatch center where the Fire Department is toned out for response. Each time, the caller is asked to state their emergency and often asked some of the same questions. As a result, medical aid requests are often bogged down and delayed, while the EMD protocols and EMD process are not able to be utilized as intended or to it's full potential.

Barnstable County E911 Regional Feasibility Study

The Fire issues of multiple PSAP transfers to 911 callers, delayed notifications to the Fire Department and not being able to fully enact the EMD protocols, all indicated in the prior section of this report, can best be addressed by the Town partnering in a true Cape wide Public Safety Communication Center. This concept, its findings and current efforts by Cape Police & Fire Chiefs are actively being supported with sub-committee work and anticipation for grant funding to aid with its cost. The entire Feasibility Study for such a regionalized public safety venture are outlined in the December 2011 document, submitted by Intertech Associates of Freehold, NJ.

Locally, Dennis Fire is like most all other Fire Departments elsewhere where the local Police Departments have the 911 PSAP lines in their department. It is always good for the Police, never an ideal situation for the Fire Department under such an arrangement. However, realistically speaking, once Police have control of a communities PSAP, will never agree to relinquish it. Community politics and annual grant monies Police Department receive and which would be forward to the new PSAP, also make any change an uphill battle.

Given the fact the PSAP issue will not change in communities such as us, we feel that a possible move to the single regional center to be in the Town's best interest and would provide the Fire Department with the operational efficiencies needed, service enhancements such as a single Cape PSAP, the ability to utilize the EMD protocols and an improved service level overall to whom we serve. Both the Dennis Police Chief and Fire Chief enjoy a positive working relationship and both publicly support the single regional model for a Cape Public Safety Communications Center.

At this writing, the entire E911 Regional Feasibility Study with it's options and findings, projected efficiencies and various cost scenarios can be obtained from the Fire Chief's Office.



Lock Box Program

The Lock Box program in Dennis was instituted by the Fire Department in the early 80's and has been a long standing and positive program. The lock boxes are vandal and tamper proof containers, constructed like a small safe, to hold a buildings essential keys, namely entrance and door lock keys. A special type of key that cannot be reproduced is unique to the community which holds it. As in most communities, the fire department is the only agency holding the key to unlock the lockbox. The name brand of the selected lockbox for Dennis is the Supra brand. The main reason the lock box installation program was intended, was for people who had medical alarms in their home (ie: Lifeline or others). The lockbox provides firefighters with rapid entry without breaking doors, locks or doing other property damage to gain entry. When a homeowner wanted a box placed on their property, they contacted the Dennis Fire Department. The Fire Department schedules a visit to the property, and then installs the box on an exterior location, preferably near the main entrance. The building owner will then supply a set of keys to be placed into the lockbox. The Fire Department places the keys in the box and locks the box. The only way to get those keys out of the lockbox is to contact the Fire department. Due to high security issues the fire department keys are only on our main access fire trucks and ambulances as that key will access any building in Town. They are inventoried twice in a 24 hour period. The Fire Department still remains the sole key holder of the Lock Box system in order to retain the integrity of the Town program as first established.

In past years, the Dennis Fire Association had a decent inventory of boxes purchased through Association funds but had often run out of funds to purchase additional lock boxes. There was no revolving account to replenish them. Money that is taken in by the Association goes to the Association general fund.

In addition, a manual database book for locations was maintained over the years by the Fire Department. Although the data base book for lock boxes was an internal record keeping document, members indicated a need to keep it better updated and discussion centered on the need to computerize it and maintain it electronically so that field units could retrieve it in the field. That was a goal set in the 2005 goals & objectives meetings.

Having 1 or 2 people in the Fire Department, who ran the program on a part-time basis, on their days off, caused some delays in the paperwork, installations and removals being able to be completed in a more timely manner.

In 2010, the Dennis Police Department contacted the Fire Department with a request to expand the residential lock box program from not only the Fire Department but to the community volunteers TRIAD organization with the Police Department.

After discussions with fire department administration about the benefits of sharing the program and expanding, the Dennis Fire Association agreed to share the program and its resources with TRIAD.

Police, TRIAD and Fire met and agreed to share Fire Department protocols on lock box installations, open up the program for TRIAD volunteers to assist in the community, provide training for the volunteer group, to share tools and equipment for installation and the Police agreed to provide for purchase of additional boxes for the program. The resources that were to be shared besides personnel in the program were the Supra brand lock boxes and the manual inventory master book of locations. The TRIAD group and the Police took on the project of updating the Lock Box book in its manual form.

During the recent Strategic Analysis process, firefighters indicate a strong desire to put the program back under the sole operation of the Dennis Fire Department. Personnel gave some examples of people they spoke to who were confused about who they should contact for a lock box.

The transfer of information between the agencies had become a chronic problem. Applications for the boxes were being faxed back and forth between the Fire and Police departments and accountability for the disposition of the application often became muddled. Because of the confusion with people on vacation and some not available, a few people had called to have boxes installed and reported having to wait for up to 3 weeks for someone to come out and install their box.

Overall, the volunteers appeared to be doing a good job with the situation but some concerns were raised about whether the TRIAD group had declined in membership and if some of the ones who had the most interest and activity with the lock box system were no longer with the organization. Dennis Police volunteers had now taken over the program from TRIAD but may have only be able to work on the project just a few days a week. It was understood the volunteers would need to have at least two people to do installations or removals and some wondered if that may be a problem with or cause future delays. Unfortunately, the database for updated locations and removals were not available to Fire Department personnel. It was not available in our records management system or in the Police IMC system. Barnstable County Fire Dispatch also did not have a record of the database. Overall, the Fire Department membership had concerns that even though well intended, opening it up outside our department has not worked as well as hoped.

Discussions for Improvement to Lock Box Program

- The Strategic Planning process has suggested the Lock Box program now be assigned solely to the Fire Inspections division of the Fire Department. Boxes would be installed and removed as part of the daily inspection schedule.
- Our goal would be to provide customer service within 24 hours of a request. The data for the box installations would be logged to our records management system immediately.
- Working with Alicia Messier, GIS specialist, the Fire Department has copied the assessors database to our records management system. All 16,181 properties in Town now have a unique ID. Each of these property records are capable of storing numerous details within each property such as inspection information, responses, chemical storage and could now easily include Lock Box status. In short our Lock Box installation and removals are now able to be tracked immediately into our records management system, along with other property information.
- If the program is to continue to work, there should be a dedicated revolving account to replenish the boxes. Additional monies must be charged over the cost of the box to allow for free boxes that are sometimes given out.
- The Fire Department conducts hundreds of mandatory home inspections when residential property changes hands. Many of these homes have lock boxes that are inactive or not needed. The status of the lock box can be immediately checked and updated or removed from the database. If the box is no longer needed it can be removed promptly and recycled for future use.
- If police volunteers still wanted to have some type of involvement in the community lock box program, we should leave that door open, as long as volunteers report to the Fire Inspections division.
- The Dennis Fire Association should continue to work in partnership with the Fire Department Administration, in the purchase of the boxes and the implementation of the program.

Public and Media Information

We are inconsistent in our methods of getting information out to the public either for news releases on incidents or general information on fire department activities. There is no one person or backup person assigned or responsible from within our department to see that the information is sent out to the same people in the same manner. This is true across the board with radio, print and television outlets. The department shares an e-mail list of all these media agencies, similar to the police department, but we are not providing regular updates either on breaking events, public service announcements or general information to get our message out.

The fire department needs to improve our in-house procedures on when and how we disseminate information. In order for the public information function to become consistent and effective, one person must take the lead to establish a public information program and consistent procedures. These procedures would be such that, in this person's absence, others could carry on. We need a media policy to help direct our members in the event of a high profile event as well as day to day media releases. It also could serve as a reminder of the departmental consequences of social media improprieties. It is key that the person or person(s) responsible for the public information function have excellent writing skills, basic PIO training and a desire to further the image of the department.



Strategic Plan Objectives

Goal Setting (3)

- To utilize and refer to this Strategic Plan as a working guideline and template for current and future planning
- To re-evaluate and modify this Strategic Plan in 5 years from it's date of issue
- To annually monitor the Dennis Fire Department's, Vision, Mission, Values and Strategy as outlined in this plan

Personnel Related (7)

- To hire 4 new Firefighter/Paramedics in order to address the Northside Ambulance Inequity Issue, placing an ambulance at Fire Station 2, on a 24/7 basis
- To hire 4 new Firefighter/EMT's and 4 new Firefighter Paramedics in order to provide more efficient staffing levels and improved service to the community
- With the aforementioned new fulltime positions in place; to set group staffing levels at 12 with a minimum of 9 on duty, thereby significantly reducing overtime costs to the Town
- To maintain staffing at Station 2 at a minimum of 3 personnel at all times for Fire and Ambulance coverage
- To continue internal management controls affecting overtime costs such as sick leave analysis, bargaining agreement terms and staffing and response standards
- Continue to maintain a minimal Call Force within the department at 6 members and to provide improved training, activity and structure within the group
- To hire a Part-Time Office Assistant for 15 hrs per week to assist Office Manager with front office, clerical, administrative, phone inquiries and public greeting functions.

Equipment and Facilities (8)

- To fully inventory all Fire Department Buildings and Facilities Equipment and provide a systematic and comprehensive replacement plan based on useful service life
- Work in conjunction with the Public Building Department on a regular basis to prioritize a comprehensive Building repairs and Maintenance plan for both Stations
- To engage the community in a dialogue for options on either expanding Station 2, building a new one and/or relocating the facility within the 5 Year Capital Plan
- To fully inventory all Department Portable Fire Equipment and provide a systematic and comprehensive replacement plan based on useful service life

- To increase funding by 35 % over 3 years to the Vehicle Repair and Maintenance budget in order to be more proactive in our Preventive Maintenance program for vehicles
- Continue to generate the annual vehicle inventory report and follow the guidelines of the Fire Department Apparatus Replacement Program each year
- As a Town-wide objective, to pursue the impending Federal radio grant to bring the community into compliance with the NFPA, SAFECOM and Homeland Security standards
- To complete the Town's 20% local match of the \$ 800,000 grant to purchase one hundred fifty five (155) portable radios and seventy four (74) mobile radios

Fire Prevention and Investigation (9)

- Establish a Public and Life Safety Education Team, which is properly trained and certified. These individuals would be the persons selected to provide educational services to the public under the direction of the Fire Inspector
- To have the team develop a yearly schedule for school education at all levels, open houses, public events and community public speaking appearances
- Appoint a SAFE Coordinator to apply and manage grant money from the State
- To have the team develop applications for USFA Prevention Grants and other financial opportunities available.
- To ensure the Department supports and funds the activities of the team such as training, conferences, and work time.
- To provide support staff for the Fire Prevention Division. Any new staff positions in the department should be assigned to Fire Prevention and be used to fill in for the Office Manager when she is out.
- To train and certify staff as Fire Inspectors. These people would be the only ones offered positions to fill in for the inspector when on vacation or on other leave. This would also train people for the position in the future and increase their effectiveness as company officers.
- Move to electronic inspection modules to increase productivity and accountability of staff.
- Continue to maintain Fire and Arson Investigation program with Dennis Police and State Police Fire Marshal Unit

Firefighting Abilities (3)

- To instill, through training and actions, our need to recognize and take into account our limitations on the fireground until we have enough firefighters on scene to operate effectively and efficiently under NFPA task assignments and OSHA 2 in – 2 out standards
- To strive to meet our objective of assembling 15 personnel in 8 minutes, 90% of the time for structure fire response, through a system of callback, line boxes and staff response
- To ensure firefighters have proper support through training as well as updated tools, equipment and apparatus to perform their jobs safely

Advanced Medical Systems (7)

- To increase the Medical Supply budget for the EMS program by 20% over the next 3 years in order to maintain a more complete stock and inventory of supplies & medications
- To provide the Board of Selectmen a report on the 1 year trial program on maintaining a “reserve” ambulance for long term repairs to the rolling front line units
- To review EMS training hours, identify needs and provide sufficient funding for training modules not able to be completed on duty time with shift training
- Continue objective of using 3 firefighters on certain high priority calls identified, as a highly effective practice that should be continued
- To move the current EMS coordinator’s position to a 40 hr week schedule to provide a more efficient program due to today’s complexities and demands in the emergency medical field
- To provide an updated analysis of the current Electronic Emergency Medical System Reporting (Ambulance report computers) system within 3 years to determine plan for any upgrades or changes and budgeting requirements
- To maintain the Board of Selectmen’s objective of Ambulance fees being the regional Medicare rate plus 40% and to provide annual updates to Board each January

Marine and Specialty Rescue (4)

- To work with the Dennis Harbormaster and Dennis Beach Department according to our newly established Maritime Medical Emergencies Policy
- To have the Harbormaster work and talk to Dennis Fire and other Town agencies on the Town approved 400 mhz and 800 mhz radio systems instead of us all switching to the Marine Band channel 66
- To make all efforts for the Dennis Fire Department Dive Rescue Team to join under the umbrella of the more regional Cape Cod Dive Team
- To support Dennis Firefighters interested in joining the Cape Cod Technical Rescue Team or the regional Hazardous Materials Response Team

Training and Safety (13)

- To implement a Health & Safety Committee to oversee and ensure the safety of Fire department members and report to the Deputy Chief of Operations
- For the Fire Chief to meet with the Town insurance carrier to review workplace history of Fire Department job related issues and trends
- For the research of the Fire Chief to coincide with the concerns of the Health and Safety committee towards a 10 step risk management plan for accident prevention
- To develop refresher training for all personnel on the Barnstable County Incident Command Accountability system on the fireground
- To develop a time specified Employee Orientation Program for new firefighters, ensuring new personnel are rotated between shifts and provided standard new hire important information
- Provide a comprehensive review of our training needs on the shift company level as well as defined department level needs. Balance is needed between Fire and EMS objectives
- To review and possibly modify the Fire Departments Promotional Policy as it relates to testing standards and educational requirements for advancement
- Develop a mentoring program for the future development of our Fire Officers and Supervisors
- Continue periodic Department sponsored Leadership and Professional Development seminars and opening them up to outside departments for networking and information sharing
- To provide outside instructors for company or daily training from local gas, electrical buildings and trades professionals to share knowledge practical to firefighters

- Continue periodic live fire training and practical skills exercises for shift personnel at the Barnstable County Fire Academy in Barnstable
- Provide annual firefighter driving training involving classroom and practical driving evolutions
- To strengthen and support the on-going QA/QI (Quality Analysis/Quality Improvement) program targeting certain treatment protocols and inserting training improvements into our curriculum

Employee Relations (10)

- To support training and development of the Dennis Fire Department Officers and Supervisors as well as those aspiring to become tomorrow's future leaders within the agency
- For the Fire Chief and the Town Administrator to develop a Leadership Transition Plan for the Fire Department with input from the rank and file and the Board of Selectmen
- To develop a comprehensive New Firefighter Orientation Program rotating new personnel to different shifts and providing consistent information to new hires
- To consider improvement of communications between personnel by improved use of electronic capabilities such as E-Cloud and other web-based forms of technology
- To continue an open opportunity for the airing of grievances and disagreement on issues between Labor & Management and working together towards the same goal
- Department morale must be monitored and considered in all decision making, issues concerning department policy and the culture in which we expect to work together
- The Fire Chief and Command Staff needs to be on the same page when carrying out policy and direction with Supervisors and Union Leadership
- The Fire Chief must "check in" periodically with the rank and file on a personable level in order to maintain a good pulse of the organization and what people are thinking
- Firefighters participation in Committees and General Projects should not only be encouraged but to endorse a philosophy of listening to input and suggestions
- To form an Awards and Recognition Committee with the objective to ensure that exceptional performance is recognized when deserved by the membership

Other (5)

- To establish a regular frequency of meetings with the Computer Technology Committee to review technology and computer issues within the Fire Department and some of the needs into the future for planning and budgeting purposes
- To support and endorse the proposed Barnstable County Public Safety Communications Center in the single facility plan according to the 2011 Intertech Associates Feasibility Study
- To re-visit the issue of Fire Station speakers monitoring 911 Fire and Ambulance calls to review again what is needed to accomplish this goal or why it cannot be done
- To assign the Lock Box Program back to the Fire Department under administrative control of the Fire prevention Office, in conjunction with the Dennis Fire Association
- To assign a person or person(s) responsibility for Public Information functions and develop consistent procedures for news and department activities

Future Concerns and Issues (5)

The department discussed some of the key internal concerns and some external issues that should remain as the cornerstone for the future viability and effectiveness of our fire department. Although some of these points are explained in further detail in different sections of this Strategic Plan, they are as follow:

- To partner more in ventures with Yarmouth, Harwich and Brewster in matters of response, resources and other working agreements
- To continue strengthening the Cape Fire based Emergency Medical System with outside partnerships
- The Department must continue to foster a positive relationship with Town Administrator/Selectmen and with other Town Departments and Boards
- The Fire Department must continue it's active involvement in the Dennis community
- Dennis Firefighters must be loyal to the department and our profession



APPENDIXES

Please check if you wish to not fill out this survey: _____

Please check if you already met in one on one meeting: _____

1.) How do you feel about your safety on the fireground or in the field ?

2.) Department Training and succession planning is one major goal not yet formally adopted. As busy as we are, are you comfortable with your level of training opportunities ?

3.) Since 2005, some of our goals have been accomplished, some have not been yet. What are some things you would change or try to improve on for the department ?

- 4.) One of the major issues identified with FD members in 2005, was ineffective communications (flow of information/dissemination of information/discussion ect). Do you feel like you know what's going on, even if you may disagree at times ?
- 5.) On a scale of A-F, how would you rate the morale within the Dennis Fire Dept ? What steps or actions are needed to improve morale ?
- 6.) Do you believe we should mix up the groups or the Officers to break up cliques from time to time ?

7.) On a scale of A-F, how would you rate the condition of our Fire Apparatus (vehicles) ? Again, how would you improve that ?

8.) What are your plans for the future, short-term & long-term for the Dennis FD ? How can I help you in the time we have left here to help you with your plans ?

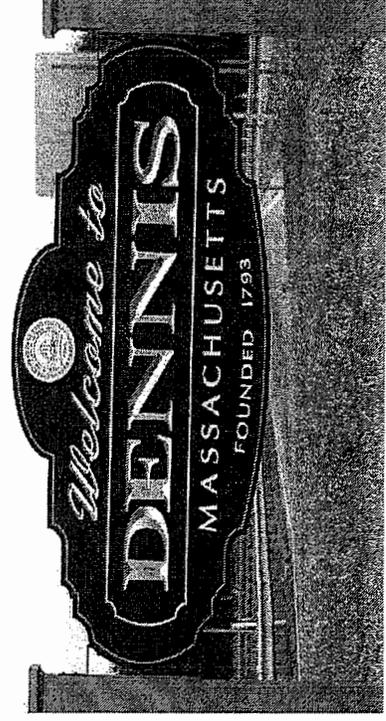
9.) Overall, how do you feel about this dept, (people, equipment) ?
(A-F ?)

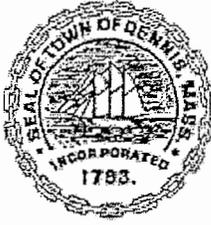
10.) Final Comments, Critiques, Criticisms, ect. ?

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Dennis Fire & Rescue Department is to serve all of the community's citizens and visitors by safeguarding collectively and individually, their lives and property.

This shall be accomplished through fire prevention, public dedication, fire suppression, advanced life support emergency medical services and the maximum use of available resources in the mitigation of all disasters, both man-made and natural.





Town of Dennis Fire & Rescue Department's
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Routine Operations

Section: Rules of Conduct

Code: 1-4

Approved by: Fire Chief Mark Dellner *Mark Dellner*

Date: 01-11-06

Revised:

4.01 PURPOSE

To outline the basic standards of general conduct expected of Fire Department members.

4.02 POLICY

- A. All Dennis Fire Department members are expected to operate in a highly self-disciplined, manner.
- B. Members shall abide by the standards of personal conduct outlined within the policy.

4.03 RESPONSIBILITY

Every member of the Dennis Fire Department is responsible to regulate his or her own conduct in a positive, productive and mature way.

4.04 CONTENT

- A. All employees shall be familiar with and adhere to the Standard Operating Guidelines and written directives contained in the Operations Manual.
- B. Members of the Dennis Fire Department shall be held responsible for the manual contents as ignorance shall not, in any instance, be considered an excuse for violations. Violations of policy will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.
- C. It shall be within the power of the Fire Chief to assign members to any particular task, detail, shift assignment, company or other assignment should he/she deem necessary for the good of the Department and the Town of Dennis.
- D. Department rank structure shall be respected and maintained at all times, relating to the Dennis Fire Department. Insubordination to a superior officer while in the performance of his/her duty will not be tolerated and may result in swift and immediate termination from the Fire Department.
- E. All members are subject to emergency recall by the Fire Chief and will report for duty upon notification unless there are satisfactory reasons why the member is unable to report for service.
- F. All shift members will report for duty on time and no member shall go off duty until properly relieved. Tardiness extending beyond the stipulated reporting time shall constitute failure to report. The shift officer may require a member from the opposite shift to remain on duty until the late person reports or until other arrangements are made.
- G. Members will not physically fight while on duty or in the performance of fire department functions or details.
- H. All members shall cooperate and comply with other Municipal, State and Federal agencies in the observance of laws for public safety.
- I. Any member convicted of a felony violation may be terminated by the Fire Chief.
- J. Any member convicted of a misdemeanor or other violation of the law, may be dealt with by department disciplinary action should the Fire Chief determine such action is detrimental to the public safety image of the Dennis Fire Department and the Town of Dennis.
- K. Firearms or dangerous weapons will not be allowed in either of the Town's 2 fire stations, any department vehicle or carried on their person while in the performance of fire department activities.
- L. Members shall not bring, or permit any intoxicating beverage to be brought into any of the Town's 2 fire stations without the approval of the Fire Chief, such as a special occasion or event. Members or non-members of the Fire Department who are under the influence of intoxicants shall not be allowed in department buildings.
- M. Members shall not bring or permit any drug to be bought into either of the Town's 2 fire stations for any purpose other than medicinal use. While on duty, members shall not

- take any drug, prescription or non-prescription that may cause them to sustain any degree of loss of their mental or physical faculties.
- N. Members shall not leave quarters, fires, or other duties without first seeking approval from their officer in charge.
 - O. Gambling with any instrument or device for money or any other article of value is prohibited.
 - P. No member, either verbally or in writing, shall directly or indirectly present any complaint or grievance to the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Town Attorney or any other Town Official relative to the business operations or affairs of the Dennis Fire Department without first having presented such grievance or complaint to the Fire Chief.
 - Q. No member shall circumvent the department's chain of command to call or talk to the Fire Chief when it concerns the department. The only exception to this regulation is concerning official union business. No member shall publicly criticize the official actions of the department while on duty.
 - R. No member shall remove, alter or change any official department record, release or expose any contents of employee personnel records, or otherwise release sensitive personnel related information unless authorized by the Fire Chief.
 - S. No member shall obligate the Department or Town of Dennis financially in any manner except as authorized by the Fire Chief.
 - T. Participation by department members in any strike or other action which is in any degree adverse to the maintenance of the public safety or welfare is prohibited.
 - U. No member of the fire department shall verbally or physically abuse members of the general public or Town Officials and will treat the general public with a high degree of respect at all times.
 - V. No member of the fire department shall discriminate against any person, in any manner to include, but not limited, to the following: Age, Sex, marital Status, Race/Color, Nationality, Place of Birth, and Political Affiliation.

GENERAL NOTE CONCERNING DENNIS FIRE DEPARTMENT'S RULES OF CONDUCT

For purposes of this document, our Rules of Conduct shall be recognized as a representation of our Department and as an overall statement of our Fire Department policy.

It represents our principles and speaks to the core values of the Dennis Fire Department as an organization.

Mark Dellner
Chief of Department
Town of Dennis, Massachusetts

Building & Facilities Equipment Replacement Program

Filing Cabinets

- Offices
- Bedrooms

Chairs

- Offices
- Training Room
- Living Areas
- Kitchens
- Bedrooms

Desks, Tables & Nightstands

- Offices
- Bedrooms
- Kitchens
- Living Areas

Bookcases

- Offices
- Training Room
- Bedrooms

Refrigerators

Stoves

Dishwashers

Toasters

Pots, Pans, Silverware, Cups, Dishes

Microwaves

Lockers

Bed Frames & Mattresses

Overhead Training Projector and Bulbs

Vacuum Cleaners

Mops, Brooms, Squeegees, Buckets

Trash Cans

Phones

Televisions

Computers

Ice Machine

Washing Machine

Commercial Dryer

Pressure Washer

Vehicle Exhaust Systems

Overhead Door Openers

Copy Machines

Fax Machines

Portable Fire & Rescue Equipment Replacement Program

Fire Hose

- 1 ¾ "
- 2 ½ "
- 4"

Forcible Entry and Ventilation Tools

- Axes
- Haligan Bars
- Bolt cutters
- Pry bars
- Pike Poles
- Mallets

Nozzles & Hose Appliances

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

Personal Protective Firefighting Gear

- Bunker Coats
- Bunker Pants
- Boots
- Gloves
- Helmets
- Protective Hoods

Thermal Imaging Cameras

Portable Radios

Flashlights

Foam

Fire Scene Tape

Chain Saws

Gas Cans

Hydraulic Lacks

Chains

Air Chisels

Portable Tool Kits

Rotary Rescue Saws

Portable Lights

Extension Cords and reels

Hydrant Valves

Hydrant Bag Kits

Portable Generators

Portable Pumps

Blocking and Cribbing

Salvage Covers

Fire extinguishers

Tyvek Contamination Suits

Speedi Dry Shovels Portable pumps

Smoke Ejectors

Traffic Cones Rescue Ropes and Bags

Coolers

Water Vacuums

Medical Kits for Engines

Ladder Belts

Electric Cords and Reels

Electric Cord Adaptors and Connectors

Power Cord Junction Boxes

Flood lights

Dive Equipment

- Suits
- Tanks
- Masks
- Harnesses
- Rescue rope & Bags
- Flotation Vests
- Water Rescue Suits
- Water Rescue Helmets

Backboards

Rescue Straps and Beaners

Binoculars

Flotation rings

AED's

APPENDIX F**DENNIS FIRE DEPARTMENT
VEHICLE INVENTORY**

VEHICLE	DESCRIPTION	MILES	HOURS
Ambulance 106	2008 Ford/Horton – Ambulance	86,754	3,066
Ambulance 104 RESERVE	2006 Ford/Horton – Ambulance	121,788	4,372
Ambulance 105	2010 Ford/Horton – Ambulance	38,914	232
Ambulance 107	2012 Ford/Horton – Ambulance	2,831	

Engine 114	2003 American LaFrance – Pumper	117,448	8,169
Engine 111	2007 Pierce - Pumper	29,790	1,737
Engine 112	1997 Emergency One – Pumper	66,616	4,932
Engine 115	2012 Emergency One – Pumper	NEW	NEW
Ladder 110	1994 Emergency One – 110' Ladder	32,535	3,263

Dive Truck 116	1990 GMC Dive Truck	85,371	
Truck 100	2006 Ford F-250 Pickup – Staff Vehicle	54,444	
Truck 108	1999 Ford F-450 4x4 Brush Truck	7,215	

Car 103	2010 Ford Explorer Staff Vehicle	27,271	
Car 102	2006 Ford Expedition – Staff Vehicle	70,675	
Car 101	2012 Ford Explorer	9,519	

(Updated October 3, 2012)

**Dennis Fire Department
Vehicle Inventory for Boats, Motors and Boat Trailers**

Boat 117 – Trailered at Headquarters

17' Boston Whaler
75 hp Honda 4 stroke motor
w/registered boat trailer

Boat 118 – Docked South at Bass River Marina for Nantucket Sound

25' Safe Brand Rescue Boat
Twin 185 hp Mercury JD Optimax motors
w/registered boat trailer

Boat 119 – Docked North at Sesuit Harbor for Bay Side Area

23' Boston Whaler
Twin 200 hp Mercury 2 stroke motor
w/registered boat trailer

(updated October 3, 2012)



August 10, 2012

Chief Dellner
Dennis Fire Department
883 Main Street (Rte. 28)
West Dennis, MA 02670

Chief,

My summary of the program held at the Dennis Fire Department is very positive. I found a good blend of personnel, who seem to work well together and care about their performance and equipment. The classroom portion of the training went very well, with great participation and many questions and positive comments. My observation was that many felt this is a necessary part of continued training.

The practical portion of the program went very well also. The Tony Kent lot was perfect to set-up all the driving stations and allowed all to proceed through multiple times and with different pieces. With the size change in the respective vehicles, the course got harder to complete (without hitting cones). This is exactly what I expected! It makes the operator THINK and make the proper adjustments for the vehicle being operated. The mirrors, length, height and turning radius had to be accounted for. Even at the low speeds we were operating at, the "feel" of the brakes is a little different. It was great as we had some newer members who had not driven an apparatus prior to the program. We also found brake issues with 106 & 110 which justifies the need to perform air brakes checks. I believe everyone left the lot with a better understanding of the respect each vehicle demands. The size of the town with its many different driving challenges such as congestion, hills, highways etc. demand competent Emergency Vehicle Operators and in my opinion the members of the DFD are extremely capable of meeting the challenge! The Dennis Fire Department in my opinion is a very pro-active operation and I look forward to working with everyone in the future. I am always so Proud to work with the Cape Departments.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR TO COMPLETE A REFRESHER IN THE SPRING OF 2013!

Sincerely,

Ken Jones

Recommendations

I recommend that the Dennis Fire Department continue to be pro-active and institute and document an **annual refresher program**. Driving fire apparatus is a specialized component of the job.

1. Periodically review and adjust Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines.
2. When conducting shift meetings/drills, etc. Include Emergency Vehicle operations.
3. Make every effort to use back-up spotters (agree on hand signals).
4. Place (5) five cones on each truck to make the scene more visible prior to traffic entering your work zone.
5. Increase the reflective markings on the rear of all trucks (some had little or none).
6. Remember the number of motorists on the road with language/reading barriers.
7. Encourage firefighters to take a piece of apparatus out on the road to review the uniqueness of each (we drive so seldom). Make a cheat sheet re: pumps, etc.
8. Place orange "snow plow" markers on the rear of each truck to make it easier for the operator to see exactly where the end is.
9. Remember to judge the tail swing of the ladder. Markers should help with this.
10. Make sure all vehicle heights are posted for the operator to see.
11. ****DO NOT BECOME COMPLACENT****
12. Bring new members along slowly; our apparatus are BIGGER, FASTER, AND STRONGER.
13. BE SAFE—EVERYONE COMES HOME (seatbelts).
14. Pre-trip check inspection, include Air brake check.
15. Cover Hose Beds.

Power Cord Junction Boxes

Flood lights

Dive Equipment

- Suits
- Tanks
- Masks
- Harnesses
- Rescue rope & Bags
- Flotation Vests
- Water Rescue Suits
- Water Rescue Helmets

Backboards

Rescue Straps and Beaners

Binoculars

Flotation rings

AED's