**Services Provided by the Westport Fire Department**

The Westport Fire Department is a combination department that currently consists of twenty-one full-time firefighter/paramedics (line staff) and nine on-call firefighters. In addition, the Chief, Deputy, and Fire Prevention Officer work days in an administrative role but also assist the duty crew during emergency incidents. All our career members serve as **both Firefighters and Paramedics**, a "**dual-role**" position that can take several years to attain due to the amount of required training and education. A full-time firefighter/paramedic works a minimum average of forty-two (42) hours per week, providing **both fire and EMS protection** at the Advanced Life Support Level (ALS). There is always a minimum of four (4) firefighter/paramedics on duty, two in each station. The on-duty personnel are supplemented by off-duty full-time firefighters and the on-call firefighters. Staffing is a constant issue within the department due to the uncertainty and inconsistency of availability between off-duty firefighters and call-firefighter responses. There is no guarantee that the on-duty firefighters will get any help or enough help at emergency scenes to operate in a safe and effective manner. The department frequently relies on mutual aid from surrounding communities to mitigate certain fire and EMS incidents due to a lack of staffing. Westport is the fourth largest Community in the Commonwealth (land area) and has no public water supply to speak of, resulting in firefighters having to find and secure their own water supply, a task that requires additional staffing, apparatus, and equipment.

The role of the fire department has changed dramatically over the last several decades. Thirty years ago, the department responded to 1,390 calls with a total staffing level of 20 members.  Shifts operated at a minimum of 4 firefighters and a maximum of 5 per shift, split between 2 stations. Today we respond to nearly 3200 calls with a staffing level of 21 members, still operating at a four-firefighter/paramedic minimum per shift. Our call volume has doubled over the past 30 years, while our staffing levels have remained stagnant. All too often, our stations are left unstaffed while the duty crew handles simultaneous calls, creating a dangerous and unnecessary delay in both fire and EMS responses.

NFPA 1720 rural calls for a minimum of 6 staff members to assemble on scene within 14 minutes 80% of the time. With our current staffing model, we are unable to meet this standard. We cannot adhere to the OSHA standard of “2 in-2 out”. This provision requires that at least two employees enter the Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmosphere and remain in visual or voice contact with each other at all times. It also requires that at least two employees be located outside the IDLH atmosphere, thus the term "two in/two out." The current staffing model is a minimum of 4 FF/Paramedics per shift, which we are at more than 50% of the time; this places the members of the fire department and the community at risk. While the override will not get us to the staffing level we need to be at, it will serve as a step in the right direction for our department and our community.

* A number of fire emergencies responded to this year: **324 YTD - \*\*Fire Calls - alarms, brush, structure, CO incidents, Haz-Mat, Fuel/Gas leaks, investigations, wires down, motor vehicle crashes, etc.**
* The number of EMS emergencies responded to this year: **970 EMS incidents YTD.**
* Number of personnel serving: **21 line staff, 1 FPO, Deputy Chief, Chief.**
* The number of open positions: **We have received support for 6-person shifts from the town government, but funding has not been available. For well over a decade, we have been stating the need for three additional line staff members to reach our optimal goal of 6 firefighter/paramedics per shift.**
* Number of personnel needed to provide desired services: **24 total line staff (4 operational groups staffed with six firefighters/paramedics each)**
* Number to be added as a result of override: **1 Firefighter/Paramedic**
* Equipment shortages for each department: **Brush truck, reserve engine, firefighting PPE, attack hose, jet ski (marine rescue), gas meters, thermal image cameras, replacement of worn or outdated fire and EMS equipment, building maintenance (paint, trim, floors, preventative maintenance, etc.)**

Dan Baldwin **|** Deputy Chief

Westport Fire Department