



RYE FIRE RESCUE
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Mark R. Cotreau
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08/30/23

Subject: Review/update of Rye Fire Rescue Service Gaps as noted in the 2020 Rye Fire Rescue Staffing Needs Assessment Strategic Plan

Below is the status of our identified service gaps as noted in the 2020 Rye Fire Rescue Staffing Needs Assessment Strategic Plan. As you can see there has been a major improvement in almost all areas of concern. This is due to a major effort by the Selectboard and residents to provide additional shift coverage as well as a commitment to fill the long-vacant Deputy Fire Chief position (effective October 1). We are very appreciative that working together as a team, the residents and visitors to Rye are safer!

I have summarized each identified service gap, however, please refer to the 2020 Rye Fire Rescue Staffing Needs Assessment (on our website) for full content and perspective.

Finding #1: Adequacy of Rye Fire Rescue Resources

- Service Gap: Rye Fire Rescue does not have the ability to fully handle all the tasks required of a first due response agency.
 - See Finding #2 Updates.
- Service Gap: Rye Fire Rescue cannot maintain quick initial response to overlapping calls when out on an emergency response.
 - Update: *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* With the addition of 3 person shifts, coverage has improved. Mutual aid remains a critical component. While this is an improvement the % of overlapping calls has risen from 11% to 17% (2022). This is most likely due to rising call volume. We cover this Gap by having the additional shift member available on most occasions to at least make initial contact to the second call. If recalled members are in at the time of the second call, the second ambulance will be staffed which eliminates the need for mutual aid and further delay but most of the time we can at least have someone first due to a second call in reasonable time. We will monitor this further but currently recommend no further action.

Finding #2: Operational Benefits and liabilities

- Critical Service Gap: We are typically not able to staff the 3 critical positions on a fire truck.



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- Update: *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- Service Gap: Off Duty and call force recall is not predictable.
 - Update: *NO CHANGE* This situation remains an issue. We don't expect this one to change much. This type of call back ebbs and flows. The socio-economic atmosphere which has been long working against us continues to be an issue.
- Service Gap: The ambulance crew of two is required to wait until off duty members arrive on scene for help with needed urgent procedures.
 - Update: *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- Service Gap: Lack of first due engine response to MVA's
 - Update: *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- Service Gap: We can staff the jet ski but lack someone to initiate land-based coordination of the incident.
 - Update: *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- Service Gap: There is a delay in the response of a fire truck should the ambulance be out of quarters for some other business.
 - Update: *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- Service Gap: Our customer service suffers when there are no staff at the fire station.
 - Update: *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* The addition of the Deputy Fire Chief position (effective 10/1/23) will provide better administrative customer service. The deputy fire chief will help provide consistent service oversight. I expect a dramatic increase in coverage but certainly not a complete fix. We will monitor the level of service increase.
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- Service Gap: Often no staff to answer the door or field telephone calls.
 - Update: *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* The addition of the Deputy Fire Chief position (effective 10/1/23) will provide more lobby and telephone coverage. The deputy fire chief will help provide consistent service oversight. I expect a dramatic increase in coverage but certainly not a complete fix. We will monitor the level of service increase.



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Finding #3: Call Force Benefits and Liabilities

- **Service Gap:** Talented call force members are being trained by Rye Fire Rescue only to leave active service in Rye.
 - Update: *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* The addition of part-time per-diem shift coverage has provided an opportunity for call force members to stay on as per-diem. The addition of per-diems has already had a dramatic increase on our call force in that several of them have become per-diems and several more have voiced an intention to do the same. The nature of the per-diem program creates an expectation that the per-diems will come and go as most seek full time positions. We don't see that changing. Recently we have had a quality pool of per-diems to draw from for full-time spots. Again, the potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- **Service Gap:** Talented call force members do not have adequate organizational support.
 - Update: *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* The addition of the Deputy Fire Chief position (effective 10/1/23) will provide more bandwidth to increase organizational support for the call force. The deputy fire chief will help provide more consistent organizational oversight. We expect an increase in support and will monitor same.

Finding #4 Advanced Life Support

- **Service Risk:** The department currently has 4 paramedics. Need to maintain 6 paramedics to ensure adequate coverage.
 - Update: *RECTIFIED* Our 6th paramedic is just finishing up his school. We should be at 6 paramedics in October.
- **Service Gap:** Critical procedures for our sickest patients often take longer than necessary due to 2-person shift staffing:
 - *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters.
- **Service Gap:** There are often no members left in town to respond 'first due' to a second ambulance call.
 - *PARTIALLY RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has partially provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number



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of per-diem firefighters. We cover this Gap by having the additional shift member available on most occasions to at least make initial contact to the second call. If recalled members are in at the time of the second call, the second ambulance will be staffed which eliminates the need for mutual aid and further delay but most of the time we can at least have someone first due to a second call in a timely manner.

Finding #5: Adequacy of our Delivery Model

- Service Gap: Rye Fire Rescue's Service Delivery Model is inadequate to ensure adequate initial response to emergencies.
 - *RECTIFIED* The third position on each shift has provided this capability. The potential liability here is our ability to maintain an appropriate number of per-diem firefighters. The addition of a Deputy Fire Chief also enhances this capability during the weekday shifts.

Overall: Over the next 3-5 years, the biggest liability for us would be if we get to a spot that we consistently cannot cover the third spot on all three shifts with a per-diem. For example, say in 3 or 4 years the market further tightens and we consistently can cover two but not all three shifts with per-diems. If that happens over a consistent time period, with good data, we may have to propose a full-time firefighter to fill that third vacant shift position. Aside from this potential issue (which would be an important safety issue), we believe we are in good shape for a town of our size, infrastructure, and service population.

Respectfully,

Mark Cotreau, EFO CFO