

LEANDER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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2003-2004

YEARLY REVIEW

ANSWERED

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Executive Summary

In August of 2004 the Leander Vol. Fire Dept. Board of Directors in conjunction with the staff and management of the Leander Fire Department created a report that evaluated the current service provided by the Leander Fire Department and how the department would address those concerns. The information provided in the report showed the signs of a rapidly growing community that has begun to supersede the current available resources provided by the fire department. The report also showed calls for service increasing at a rate of 29% annually. The current staffing resources are maximized to the point of inability to provide timely response to other calls for service. The department is not meeting the national recommended standards at the time of the report. The department had received no substantial increase in funding and staffing in several years. There were five main areas of concern that needed to be addressed:

Concerns

- Staffing - Lack of Adequate Staffing is leading to longer response time, failure to meet nationally recognized standards, inability to meet increasing call volume and unsafe working environment.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention – Because of increasing demands to meet community needs, the ability to consistently retain qualified volunteers for any length of time and to find other citizens in the community willing to give of the required time and risk.
- Fleet – Increasing call volume and time on scene has begun to increase the wear and tear of fleet leading to increasing unit hour cost and unit out of service time.
- Protective Equipment – The increasing number of staffing and additional wear on protective equipment with existing age requires replacement and plan for continued up keep of protective equipment.
- Communications – The ability to communicate emergencies to the volunteers and communicate effectively on a fire scene increases with the need of call volumes increase and becomes less controllable with the continued addition of volunteer staff.

While the report identified five areas of concern, there were also some possible recommendations that were suggested for consideration and review by the City of Leander.

Report Recommendations

- Staffing – The department developed a possible staffing need report that should be evaluated by the city, and then a plan developed for implementation with adequate funding. This plan is Appendix C. While it may not be possible to meet all parts of the plan, the need for additional staffing to begin in October 2004 is crucial.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention – The ability to properly provide adequate equipment, communications, and working fleet will help in recruiting more interest in the department while the addition of more career staff will help in providing additional training, management, and decreased non-emergency work load so volunteers are retained for longer periods of time.
- Fleet – The City support the current evaluation of the first line engine for possible early trade in to lower out of service time and decrease maintenance cost while preparing for the purchase of an aerial device to be delivered in 18 months with the projected opening of the new station.

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- Protective Equipment – The City support the current lease purchase program being investigated by the current fire administration and provide the funding for a lease purchase agreement to begin in October of 2004.
- Communications – The City support and fund a purchase agreement for new radios for the staff with the purchase and implementation of new hand held radio equipment taking place over the next two budget cycles.

The Department took the report and began to evaluate the information and develop a plan that could be submitted to the City of Leander that would resolve these problems for the short and long term. The following information shows the current status of the areas of concern.

Status and Current Plan

- Staffing – The department developed a staffing plan and submitted it as part of the ten year plan for the City of Leander. The first part of the plan is the addition of several new positions in both administration and operations starting in the 2005-2006 budget year.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Retention – The department has begun a community out reach program to inform citizens in the area about the volunteer potential. The department also has proposed a volunteer firefighter benefit program that would include retirement, medical coverage, increased training programs, new personal protective equipment, and recognition programs to support new volunteers and retain current volunteers. The cost of these programs are currently be submitted in the 2005-2006 budget year.
- Fleet – The Department is requesting authorization to specify and purchase a Quint Fire Apparatus this would give us the abilities of both an engine and aerial device. The ability to specify and order this apparatus for delivery in October 2006 would make the first payment for the device due in October 2007. This apparatus should be purchased in a lease purchase program to help eliminate large item cost and keep replacement options open in the future.
- Protective Equipment – The City approved a lease purchase program and provided the funding for a lease purchase agreement with funds from the current fire department budget and allowed the ability to begin replacing out dated protective equipment for the firefighters both career and volunteers. This program was a new and unique purchase plan that provided price savings for the department and allowed for future gear purchases at todays pricing.
- Communications – The department purchased used radios to keep solve emergent communication problems. The department has submitted budget request to repair the current repeater system with additional radio and paging equipment. This program should be supported until a radio upgrade and replacement program can be funded either by grant funds or bond funding

The current status on addressing the concerns should be reported as in progress. The administration and management of the fire department feel the submitted 10 year plan and current budget proposal is a good start in addressing the areas of concern while still being fiscally responsible and representative of the current status of the community.

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