



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Tuesday, September 21, 2010 – 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Alds. Jay (6:35 p.m.), McBride, Meaux, Nikceovich, Organ (6:36 p.m.), Pantuso, Walsh (7:25 p.m.), Wilke, Wilson, Berdan, Birschel, Causier, Donegan, Hanson (6:37 p.m.) -14

EXCUSED: Ald. Ewerdt

ALSO Mayor Didier; Mr. Archambo, City Administrator; Mr. Kesner, City Attorney;
PRESENT: Ms. Aldana, HR Director/Asst. City Attorney; Fire Chief Redman; Police Chief Weber; Mr. Wehrley, City Engineer; Asst. Fire Chiefs Anton and Carberry; Deputy Chiefs Rice, Case, Erke, Lee

Ald. Meaux in the Chair

Presentation of ICMA Operations and Data Analysis Report of Fire Department. Ald. Meaux introduced the item by explaining that late in 2009 the Common Council authorized execution of a contract to perform an operational and financial analysis of the fire department operation.

Leonard Matarese, Director of Public Safety Services of the International City /County Management Association (ICMA), and Donald James, Senior Manager of the ICMA Public Safety Programs, were present. Mr. Matarese stated that local governments nationwide are looking at how they have traditionally delivered services, determining whether or not those methods are sustainable, and deciding if different approaches to service delivery are advisable in light of fiscal restraints.

Mr. Matarese stressed that the intent of the departmental analysis was not one of criticism, and noted that the fire department was very responsive to their study and worked closely with the ICMA team.

Mr. James stated that the analysis focused on the following key issues:

- Conduct data analysis and operational assessment to address future needs according to workload and other metrics
- Provide analysis of the validity of the Almont & Associates study recommendations and evaluate the resulting service levels based upon recommendations implemented
- Consider relevant contract issues and evaluate the span of control issues for supervisors
- Develop a long-range strategy to address current public safety issues to provide improved services at a level consistent with financial ability
- Evaluate the Command Staff work schedule for effectiveness
- Conduct a financial analysis of the contract with Milwaukee County for fire services

A total of 17 findings/recommendations were made:

Findings

- **Recommendations**

The department does not conduct periodic community risk assessments to evaluate and identify magnitude and scope of fire risk within the community.

- The department should undertake a master planning process that utilizes various assessment tools available today, including the Commission on Fire Accreditation International Self-Assessment Process and the standard of response cover.

The department lacks a strategic plan to guide it toward the future.

- The department should conduct a strategic planning process to help determine its direction and how best to use its resources.

The department minimum staffing policy is based on national standards.

- The department should develop a performance-oriented standard at the local level by conducting tasks analysis for various fire ground operations.

Engines are still the primary fire- suppression apparatus used by the department. Quints have proven to be more versatile and represent a cost savings in capital purchases.

- Future acquisition of suppression units should consider replacement of engine apparatus with quints.

Based on workload analysis conducted using CAD data and an operational assessment of existing community conditions and future growth trends, opportunities exist for a reduction in minimum staffing levels.

- Three alternative staffing level reductions are presented for consideration, including cost reductions. Alternative I: 4 positions at 15% (\$370,000); Alternative II: 9 positions at 33% (\$845,000); and Alternative III: 11 positions at 59% (\$1.033million).

There is ineffective utilization of dual-trained personnel.

- The department should upgrade the quint unit to paramedic service delivery capability.

Staffing reductions necessitate new approaches to augmenting fire ground forces at the emergency scene beyond initial attack.

- Establish, review, and revise mutual/automatic aid intergovernmental agreements with surrounding fire departments to ensure adequate capability and capacity for fire-suppression workload.

A high incidence of false alarm responses by the WFD creates significant impact on the operating budget and jeopardizes the safety of the public as well as the responding personnel.

- Reevaluate the penalty fees for false alarms under the City of Wauwatosa Fire Prevention Code. Fee assessments should be more representative of the actual cost associated with these alarms.

Turnout times for both fire suppression and EMS are well above NFPA standards.

- The department should employ closer monitoring of turnout times by Operations staff to identify potential issues and hold personnel accountable for failing to meet performance measures.

Building structure dispatch assignments are static in that they do not change to reflect information on an occupancy's false alarm history or information received from alarm companies.

- The department should implement a "variable response" policy based on occupancy history information from field units and transmitted from an alarm monitoring company. This would limit the number of units assigned to an initial response and/or holding in reserve additional units to run silently until the condition is confirmed by the arriving unit.

A home smoke detector installation program should be reviewed for effectiveness and achievement of performance goals.

- The department should establish and implement an ongoing home smoke detector program initiative, focusing on installations by fire department personnel to include maintenance objectives.

A 24-hour rotating shift schedule for the Assistant Chief is inefficient and ineffective.

- The department should establish three Battalion Chief positions assigned to act as shift Commander for each platoon.

The Deputy Chief Fire Prevention tasks are inappropriate for that level of authority.

- The department should eliminate the Deputy Chief Fire Prevention position and establish a section leader position with rank of Lieutenant or Captain.

The Assistant Chief for Administration responsibilities are inappropriately assigned to a senior-level staff member.

- The department should realign position responsibilities under the Fire Chief.

In the agreement between the city and the county, the county payment is somewhat less than the cost to the city.

- The city should review the agreement based on findings of financial analysis and renegotiate terms of cost reimbursement. Suggest adding false alarm fee charges to compensate for cost gap.

The Almont Study omitted the possibility of working with local area departments to build and finance a training facility.

- The department should work with local area departments to form a training consortium and establish intergovernmental contracts to provide facility usage in exchange for monetary compensation and/or in-kind services.

The city does not provide automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) for its police response vehicles.

- The police department should implement an AED program working closely with the fire department, which in turn should work to establish a comprehensive Public Access Defibrillation program.

In response to questions by Committee members, Messrs. Matarese and James stressed that minimum staffing levels are predicated upon the needs of each community. It was noted that reducing staffing levels at station #3 could jeopardize the fire protection agreement with Milwaukee County for the county grounds.

A suggestion was made to further agendaize this study on the committee level so that the discussion can continue between Committee members and staff. Some recommendations carry serious policy implications.

Questions were raised about timing, and whether staffing-level discussions, for example, need to take into account equipment replacement schedules. Are certain outcomes based upon decisions that ought to be made in a coordinated sequence?

Responding to a query about the advisability of the fire department staff responding to the study recommendations, the Chair stated that the intent of this meeting was to receive the study overview only.

Committee members asked whether one of three staffing recommendations (alternate #1, which calls for a reduction of five staff members per shift) could be accomplished without jeopardizing the safety of the community.

Mr. James' response was that there are fire departments that operate at a minimum staffing level that is lower than Wauwatosa's minimum level that are efficient and effective. Mr. Matarese cautioned that lower staffing levels also require adequate training and equipment. Staffing alternates #2 and #3 (reducing staffing per shift by 9 and 11 individuals, respectively) require very carefully risk analysis and staff training. Additionally, the report does not advocate layoffs.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, CMC, City Clerk

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