

BARRINGTON FIRE & RESCUE

774 Franklin Pierce Highway Barrington NH 03825

(603) 664-2241

"Our family helping yours"

Rick Walker
Fire Chief

Eric Lenzi
Asst. Fire Chief

2024 Budget Cover letter

With a staff of about 20 call members, 4 full-time, and multiple part-time Firefighter/EMT's. Barrington Fire & Rescue proudly protects its 9,400 residents and guests located on 49 square miles of mixed residential, commercial and forest lands with ample lakes and trails for recreational purposes. We respond to over 1200 calls for service each year to protect our residents and guests, with approximately 1.6 billion-dollar property tax base.

About 20 years ago we started to experience an increase in call volume, particularly with EMS calls, and a decrease in available volunteer responders, especially during the day. So, we began to provide financial incentives to our volunteers with the Ambulance, with limited success. We soon began to realize that we would need to do more, so in 2007 we hired our first full-time Fire Chief and in 2008 our first full-time Firefighter/EMT. This provided much needed support to our sparse daytime crews. In 2011 we began to provide a stipend to our Firefighters, but we still struggled with daytime support. In 2017 we added a third full-time Firefighter/EMT and that allowed us to provide coverage of 2 people for 12 hours a day 7 days a week and 3 people 10 hours a day M-F. In 2016 we implemented an EMS On-Call system in which we paid 2 EMT's (Emergency Medical Technician) to be available 6pm-6am every day, allowing us to provide EMS coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We soon began to see that EMS on Call coverage on the weekend was becoming a problem, many folks wanted their weekends off especially during the spring, summer, and fall, so in 2019 we hired some part-time Firefighter/EMT's to cover a part-time 12 hour overnight shift on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights from 6pm-6 am, and we matched them with an on call person. This allowed us to provide 24 hour coverage from Thursday to Sunday. In FY 2021 we added another per-diem Firefighter/EMT on Saturday and Sunday to have 3 people on duty 7 days a week from 6a-6p. In 2020 the town made a very generous investment in wages for all our employees and call members. All these changes have made a positive impact on our ability to provide quality emergency services. In FY 2021 the selectboard approved the hiring of a 4th full-time Firefighter EMT. In FY 2022 one of our full-time employees was deployed and has a return date of February 2023. In July of 2022 the Selectboard approved the hiring of our 5th full-time employee, which has allowed us to have a full-time FF/EMT on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We have funding in place to cover a part-time FF/EMT 24/7. Once fully staffed the station will be staffed 24/7 by 2 people, and the Chief covering as a third person M-F 7am-5pm and on call as needed. We began the year fully staffed and covering night shifts about 4-5 nights a week with part-time help supplementing the full-time staff. In April we lost a full-time employee and as of September 1st have not filled it. We struggle with retention issues that are rampant throughout the industry. We have instituted several different incentives to try and retain our people.

We are grateful for the support received in the past and continue to receive from the Taxpayers and Town Elders.

Our FY 2024 budget reflects a requested increase of \$201,579 which is about 23% higher than last year. Below in bullet points are the major increases to the budget.

- Full-time Hourly \$60,060 The 5th positions salary was taken from the revolving account in FY 2023, In FY 2024 it is in the budget as planned, the rest is anticipated salary increases.
- Part-time Hourly \$31,989 The majority of this increase is to pay for a part-time administrative assistant. Some is designated for anticipated hourly rate increases for part-time employees.
- Overtime \$35,000 this line was under budgeted in FY 2023 and way overspent. I anticipate spending between \$50-\$55 Thousand in overtime in FY 2023.
- Employee benefits \$58,546
- Ambulance Billing Contracts \$19,200

We continue to ask for what is needed to adequately support our department, and always try to spend our budget wisely in an effort to provide high quality services as reasonably as possible.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a cal. 664-0211.

Thank you

Rick Walker