



Fire Service in the Town and Village of Leicester

Options to Improve Service

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Prepared for:

Town and Village of Leicester

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Executive Summary

The Town and Village of Leicester asked CGR to explore options for improving local fire service, including the possibility of merging the Village of Leicester Fire Department (abbreviated “LFD” in this report) and the Cuylerville Volunteer Fire Department (abbreviated “CVFD” in this report). After data gathering and consultation with the two departments, this report comes to the following conclusions:

The status quo does not appear sustainable in the long term.

- Both LFD and CVFD are currently facing unsustainable cost trends.
 - **Both departments have had a pattern of recent budget overages**, which have required increasing contributions from the Town and Village, burdening their general funds.
 - **Large additional capital expenditures – for instance, for new fire apparatus – will be required for both depts over the next decade.** These expenses can run into the millions of dollars, depending on how much apparatus is being replaced and the capabilities of the replacement vehicles.
 - Grants or other funding may cover some of this expense, but likely not all of it, which means local taxpayers must cover the rest.
- Improvements can be made to both departments.
 - **The fire service in Leicester needs to be operating at a level consistent with current state and national standards across the board.** This includes not only the performance and preparation of volunteer staff, but also the level of equipment, apparatus and facilities.

There are choices for the future governance of the fire departments, including a Joint Fire District.

- Currently, LFD is a Village department (i.e., technically controlled by the Village), and CVFD is an independent fire company that contracts with the fire protection district that is controlled by the Town.
- The Town and Village may keep this governance model, or may choose to shift to a “Joint Fire District”, a semi-independent taxing district that would oversee a combined fire department and would not be under the direct control of either the Town or the Village.

A Joint Fire District changes how local fire protection is controlled, but it is unlikely to reduce the tax costs or expenses of the fire service in the long term without further changes to how the two departments operate, such as through a merger or reductions in equipment.

- The choice of a Joint Fire District would move fire protection costs from the Town and Village's municipal budgets into this new taxing district. It will have independent authority to set its own tax rates, which will be collected by the town.
- Some members of both fire departments believe that switching to a joint fire district would make the fire departments more independent by giving them direct control over their own operations, budgeting and taxation without Town or Village oversight. However, this is not necessarily the case.
 - Under the NYS law authorizing joint fire districts, the district's board of fire commissioners may *either* be independently elected *or* appointed by the Town and Village.
 - In other words, the Town and Village have a means of continuing direct oversight of the new fire district/department, if they so choose.

The most significant choice for the future is the configuration of fire departments.

- CGR has identified eight possible configuration options, four of which are based on combining the departments (the Joint Fire District approach), and four of which are based on not combining the departments.
 - In some configurations, both departments remain separate; in other configurations, only one of the two remains; in other configurations, both departments are merged into one.
 - The different options are presented in the body of the report.
 - CGR has estimated cost profiles for each of the different options.

CGR projects that a combined (merged) department would have the most advantages for efficiency and long-term sustainability of the volunteer base.

- A combined department is possible with or without a Joint Fire District. Whether or not a combined department should be based in a Joint Fire District depends on how the local community would like to handle taxation and budgeting for the department.

Personal disagreements and personality conflicts are currently the largest barrier to a combined department.

- The main barriers to enhanced cooperation or merged department appears to be rooted in a history of personal disagreements and ill feeling between some members of the two departments.
- This is coupled with some potentially valid concerns about different standards, training levels and operating procedures.

All of these issues and barriers can be overcome with a guided process of establishing new standards for the combined department, paired with a cooperative attitude from all parties that puts the community's needs ahead of personal egos.

- Every issue that CGR has identified is solvable with the right attitude and the willingness to cooperatively address it.

In any configuration and under any governance structure, Town and Village residents will be facing increased costs and fire taxes in the future if they want to have capable, modern fire protection service.

- Overall cost estimates and property tax estimates for the various options are provided in the body and conclusion of the report.

Volunteers are the most important resource the community has.

- Whatever other costs or considerations may be incurred, **maintaining an active and capable volunteer base is more affordable to the community than switching to paid/career firefighters.** Anything that can be done to enhance volunteer sustainability should be a priority.

Acknowledgements

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Staff Team

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Introduction

The Village and Town of Leicester share fire protection provided by two local volunteer fire departments: the Village of Leicester Fire Department (hereafter "LFD"), which is staffed by the Leicester Fire Company ("LFC"), and the Cuylerville Volunteer Fire Department (hereafter "CVFD").

Across the nation, fire services are facing new challenges as they see an increase in calls for service based on an aging community and diversification in the types of emergencies the fire service is required to respond to. This increase is making it more difficult for fire departments to meet these demands. Simultaneously, local volunteer fire services are facing struggles common throughout the state – increasing training requirements and rising expenses across all areas are matched by a dwindling volunteer pool: younger volunteers – the "next generation" – are especially challenging to find.

The Town and Village engaged CGR in 2023 to explore options for improving local fire service, including the possibility of merging the Village of Leicester Fire Department and the Cuylerville Volunteer Fire Department. The option of consolidation has been under consideration for some time and is mentioned as an "Action Item" in the Town of Leicester's 2022 Comprehensive Plan.

The fire protection needs in the Town and Village are relatively modest. There are no high structures requiring expensive aerial apparatus, with the largest local buildings being the schools, at three stories. In 2022, CVFD attended 31 fires (building, vehicle or outside fires, not including false alarms and other types of emergencies), and LFD attended 18 fires. In 2023, through October, Cuylerville had attended 19 fire calls and LFD had attended 8 fires. A substantial share of the fires were mutual aid responses to neighboring communities.

Livingston County began County-run ambulance coverage in 2011. CVFD continues to offer a Basic Life Support (BLS) Certified First Responder (CFR) response, while the County will provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance services and perform any required transports to hospitals. Fire staff and local officials feel that the County's ambulance staging is inefficient, with units staged at extreme ends of the County, requiring 20-25 minutes to arrive. They also feel that the closest alternative unit able to respond, such as Geneseo, Perry, or Mt. Morris EMS, is not always activated, in favor of the County's own units.

The Town and Village wish to provide sufficient fire protection and basic EMS first response to area residents while also being as efficient as possible with money and resource expenditures.

This report explores current conditions of fire coverage in the Village and Town, including reviewing the overall state of the two fire departments, and presents options and considerations for moving forward. The Key Findings, with summaries of the two departments, are presented first. Options for Improving the Fire Service follows. The latter portion of the report contains more detailed departmental information, calls for service information, financial information, and several appendices.

Key Findings

Leicester Fire Department/Leicester Fire Company

It is important to understand that Leicester's Fire Department (LFD) is composed of two connected organizations working together: the Fire Department itself is a municipal department of the Village of Leicester, which puts it under Village authority. This is the entity that owns almost all of the assets, buildings and equipment that it operates with. Leicester Fire Company (LFC), on the other hand, is the separately incorporated volunteer organization that staffs the Fire Department. The Village and LFC do not have a formal legal contract, but operate together on the basis of a traditional mutual agreement that LFC will serve the Village, and the Village will provide for LFC's equipment needs.

Strengths

LFC has a storied history of serving the community in and around the Village, going back more than a century. Although its numbers have reduced over time, it currently features a core group of committed members who have been working hard to uphold the company's traditions and continue to respond to emergencies throughout the area.

Apparatus

A particular strength of LFD is its apparatus. Its newest pumper/engine is only six years old and all apparatus appear to be in good condition. As these are the most capital-intensive (i.e., costly) parts of a firefighting operation, aside from facilities, the relatively quality of LFD's fleet is a notable strength.

Equipment

As well, LFD has a breathing air cascade system (funded by a FEMA grant in 2002) that is in good condition, and LFD has acquired additional airpacks and bottles to use with it.

Challenges

LFD faces a number of distinct challenges that must be addressed if it is to remain a viable firefighting organization. Some of these critical shortcomings will require substantial new funding to remedy.

Fire station

LFD's fire station is a combination of a foundational structure originally built in the 1930's, with a garage addition built in the 1970's, thus combining a structure nearly a century old with an addition half a century old. This dated structure that is not up to modern standards or codes and is not able to accommodate all of the department's desired functions or needs. A modern facility would be larger, with usable public space, and would include a fire suppression system, generator, gear wash, exhaust capture system and a security system.

Equipment

Turnout gear

50% of in-service turnout gear is greater than 10 years old. This represents a safety concern that needs addressing: old gear should be replaced not only because normal wear-and-tear reduces its effectiveness, but also because there are increasing health concerns related to chemical coatings such as PFAS that are more likely to degrade on older gear. In addition, these older Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) does not provide the safety that is needed by the firefighters during interior structural fire suppression operations.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1971, Protective Ensembles Fire Fighting, all protective ensembles should be retired after 10 years of service life. New Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) should be purchased and meet the NFPA Standards, in addition to the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

Hose

All fire service hose, both supply hose and initial fire suppression hose, should be tested on an annual basis. The test pressures and duration of tests vary based upon the type and diameter of hose. Service tests can be conducted in-house by members of the department or a third-party vendor can be hired to complete these test. All hose testing and life expectancy of hose can be found by utilizing the requirement and methodology found in NFPA Standard 1962 Care, Use, Inspection, Service Testing and Replacement of Fire Hose.

LFD reports that hose is not being regularly tested, due to lack of funds. The 5" supply hose is out of date and should be replaced as soon as possible.

Volunteer membership

One serious challenge is that LFC reports that many younger people who might otherwise volunteer are leaving the area for employment and economic reasons – often drawn to better job opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, a simple change of member policies, leadership or incentive structure would not be effective in increasing or retaining such volunteers, without a larger shift in the local economy that produced more employment opportunities.

An additional factor deterring the applications of new members is the increase in the number of training hours required to be certified as an interior structural fire fighter. These time constraints are becoming more and more demanding for a volunteer member to meet.

Summary

For LFD to remain a viable firefighting organization going forward, it will require three principal changes: 1) investment of funds to upgrade its facilities and equipment; 2) a renewed commitment to meet training and readiness standards; and 3) a robust pipeline of new members.

Increased investment

The responsibility for increased investment lies in the domain of LFD's funders: the Village and Town and its residents and taxpayers. There must be a public decision made that a sufficient level of resources must be invested to bring LFD up to current standards across the board with operations, facilities, and equipment. This will require additional public funds and possibly additional taxes. Otherwise, a policy of piecemeal, as-needed replacement will be the equivalent of authorizing a slow deterioration of overall conditions, which will lead to inability to respond properly when needed.

Although primary responsibility for additional investment lies with the public/local municipalities, LFC itself has its own role and responsibility in increasing investment, as it must be more proactive about fundraising and grant-seeking. (For example, various sources of grant funding are available to update LFD's older protective equipment.) Both of these revenue sources can be enhanced with community help if the public is aware that LFD's future viability is contingent on their support. In other words, LFC needs to reach out to the public for sustained support in terms of fundraising and help with grant-writing, etc.

A renewed commitment to training and readiness

The ISO report completed in 2014 gave LFD very low scores for training – 0.14 out of 9 points – with LFD receiving zero credit in 7 of 8 training categories. Not all of this is in LFD's control, as ISO's ideal standards include things like live-fire training at professional facilities that is not always readily available to small, rural departments. Livingston County is currently in the process of constructing a new live fire training

facility at their location in Hampton Corners. The fire departments should take every measure possible to begin to utilize these new fire training facilities when completed.

Likewise, it is harder for volunteer companies to keep up with regular training sessions to the extent that full-time, career (paid staff) fire departments are able to. However, there is clearly more that LFD can be doing to improve their training and certification levels. LFD was not able to provide detailed recent training records to CGR during our visit; its bylaws are not up to date on requiring current training standards for various positions; and senior leadership admitted they were not actively keeping up with the most recent training requirements and changes in state and federal standards. Especially important is the need to make sure a sufficient number of firefighters are up to date on their interior firefighting certifications.

LFD must make a commitment to bring itself fully up to date on all these dimensions, with an action plan for compliance. Training standards should be followed in accordance with New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), OSHA Health and Safety standards and those of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, under NFPA 1001 guidelines. The New York State Association of Fire Chiefs publishes a “best practices” in training document that can be found here: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/recommendedbestpractices>.

A robust pipeline of new volunteers

There is a crisis-level shortage of volunteers at agencies throughout the country – this is in no way unique to LFD. Neither are recruiting challenges easy to solve: most techniques have been tried and none are guaranteed solutions. However, if LFC believes it has a future, it must be able to produce new membership.

Assistance can be sought through contacting the Firefighter’s Association of the State of New York (FASNY)¹ or the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)². Both organizations have published documents to assist Volunteer Fire departments with ways to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters in their organization.

Cuylerville Volunteer Fire Department

CVFD is not a municipal department but an independent fire company, owning their own land and equipment, and the Town is contracting with CVFD for service. In practice, this means that they exercise more discretion over their internal operations and expenditures. Any requirements that the Town has for services must be clearly and explicitly spelled out in the contract. Additional requests that the Town or other parties have for CVFD actions can be voluntarily honored by CVFD, but do not have

¹ FASNY: <https://fasny.com/>

² NVFC: <https://www.nvfc.org/>

binding force unless they are specified via the contract or are otherwise obligated by State law.

Strengths

CVFD likewise has a storied history of serving the community in and around the Town, going back to 1923. It currently features an active membership that participates in a range of activities related to firefighting, BLS first response EMS, and supporting the community.

Station

CVFD's station is spacious and in relatively good condition, with the garage portion built in the 1980's and a back addition built in the 2000's. There are separate men's and women's facilities and a separate records room. The main meeting space is large enough that it is used for local public functions, such as local elections.

Volunteer membership

CVFD appears to have a robust and active membership, to the point where Town authorities have reportedly complained that too many volunteer members may be responding to individual emergency calls. This is, in some respects, a good 'problem' to have and one that many other volunteer fire departments may wish they had.

At some point in time, the fire department may face the same challenges as numerous other fire departments are facing when it comes to recruiting and retaining volunteer members. As noted above, there are several organizations and resources that are available to assist the fire department with various programs when it comes to recruitment and retention of volunteer members.

Challenges

Member requirements/Record-keeping

CVFD has a fairly informal system of volunteer commitment, without specific requirements for personnel hours or training hours. Volunteer willingness to show up for calls is taken as a sign of commitment and simply tracked on the call run sheets. Other statistics or tracking of membership activities were not immediately available. Thus, CGR could not independently assess the level of membership involvement.

Likewise, when reviewing CVFD's financial statements, there were discrepancies between its annual Profit & Loss statements and its 990 tax filings that made tracking actual income and expenditures difficult. We believe that more careful record-keeping going forward should result in consistent financial statements.

Apparatus replacement

CVFD's pumper/engine is almost 20 years old, while its pumper/tanker is nearly 30 years old. These will need to be replaced soon. NFPA Standard 1911: *Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-service Emergency Vehicles* recommends that fire apparatus should be taken out of first-line service at 15 years. In the last 10 to 15 years, much progress has been made in upgrading functional capabilities and improving the safety features of fire apparatus. Apparatus more than 15 years old might include only a few of the safety upgrades required by the recent editions of the NFPA fire department apparatus standards or the equivalent Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC) standards. Because the changes, upgrades, and fine tuning to NFPA 1901 have been truly significant, especially around safety, fire departments should seriously consider the value (or risk) to fire fighters of keeping fire apparatus more than 15 years old in first-line service.

Although CVFD has an equipment capital fund, this is for less-costly items and only receives \$5,000, annually. This is far short of what will be needed for new apparatus, and CVFD will require significant external funding to be able to afford a replacement. Current cost and timing for the acquisition of new fire apparatus could be anywhere from \$400,000 to \$1,000,000 and take anywhere from 12 to 36 months to manufacture.

Communications equipment

CVFD reports challenges to its internal and external communications systems. Although the County has moved to a new radio system, CVFD is still experiencing spotty coverage and dead spots in various areas. Getting radio coverage area to 100% of the community will be very difficult to meet without additional expenditures being incurred. Additional information can be found in NFPA Standard 1221: *Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*.

Likewise, for tracking volunteer activation and response, CVFD uses the free version of Bryx, which, while saving money, is buggy and has delays in communicating critical messages. The free version does not come with the necessary tech support to resolve these problems.

Summary

CVFD appears to be doing fairly well with membership and equipment basics, but will face some substantial costs as it looks to replace apparatus in the near term. What the funding source for this will be – for instance, whether grants could cover a substantial portion – remains unknown. (CVFD is writing grants to the State for building upgrades and to FEMA for a new apparatus.) The Town would like a greater amount of transparency and influence in CVFD's operations and budgeting, to reassure them of its viability and effective management. CVFD wishes to retain a high degree of autonomy. This can be a tricky balance for both sides to achieve, but each must recognize the other party's interest in a good working relationship.

While CVFD has discretion over the level of financial transparency it is willing to offer to outside funders, because it is an organization that receives and spends public money, it should be transparent about what it is spending that money on (in at least broad categories) and it is subject to audit by the NYS Comptroller.

General Issues

Budget Sustainability

Both LFD and CVFD have had significant jumps in budgetary expenses over the last few years.

For CVFD, between 2020 and 2022, expenses increased by 45%, a period when the rate of inflation has been a cumulative 14%. As CVFD must cover any amounts beyond the Town contract itself, this jump in expenses appears to have significantly impacted its reserve funds.

For LFD, expenses increased by 55% between 2021 and 2023, a period when the rate of inflation has been a cumulative 16%. While LFD's increase in costs (approximately \$19,000) has not been extreme in actual dollar terms, it has required increasing coverage from the Village's General Fund, which has implications for local residents.

In short, while these overages are not unreasonable, given the cost of fire equipment, if this trend continues, it will not be sustainable either for the Town and Village, or for the departments.

Department Projected Operating Costs

The following cost projections combine both annual operating costs, based on the budget information reviewed above, and the cost of major equipment replacement needed within the next decade, averaged out over a 10-year timeframe.

LFD cost projections

- **Yearly operating cost:**

Based on the budget information presented above, **LFD has averaged operating costs of \$47,000 per year over the last three years, with an average of \$40,000 per year coming from Town and Village funding.** The difference is made up from grant money and LFD's reserve funds.

- **Major future capital needs:**

LFD responded with 5- and 10-year projected costs for facilities and capital equipment. The full details of these project costs are presented in Appendix E.

Based on interviews, meetings and data gathered, we assess that, to maintain the status quo:

- LFD will need to replace the one older engine or mini-pumper within 10 years.
- Much of LFD's turnout gear will need to be replaced within 10 years.
- LFD's fire station is already past its prime and new operating facilities/fire station should be made available as soon as feasible.
- LFD will require substantial public investment to accomplish these upgrades.

LFD's projected major costs are approximately \$300,000 over the first five years, and another \$3.3 million over the next five years, for a total of approximately \$3.6 million over 10 years. Of this, \$2.5 million is a rough estimate for the cost of a new fire station. Excluding this cost, the expected cost is \$1.1 million over the next 10 years, of which the bulk is \$750,000 for a new pumper or mini-pumper.

In other words, the outlay for equipment and apparatus replacement needed over the next decade will average about \$100,000 per year if a new fire station is not included, and about \$360,000 per year if a new station is built.

Mayor Briffa stated in the visioning meeting that the Village cannot afford substantial additional spending as a regular expense and would have to bond for any substantial amount going forward, if there was public support for that route.

- **LFD estimated per-year expenses – next 10 years:**

Combining the two above cost estimates – average yearly operating costs, plus anticipated major capital investment costs – yields an **average yearly cost to operate LFD of approximately \$370,000 per year, over the next 10 years**, including the cost of investment in needed upgrades.

CVFD cost projections

- **Yearly operating cost:**

Based on the budget information presented in its Profit & Loss statements above, CVFD has averaged operating costs of **\$107,000 per year over three years (2020-2022)**, of which **\$61,000 per year is now coming from Town funding (plus an additional \$20,000 in 2023)**. The difference is made up from grant money and CVFD's reserve funds.

- **Major future capital needs:**

CVFD did not provide CGR with detailed 5- and 10-year cost projections. In a message, Chief Watson indicated that, outside of its typical yearly budget, CVFD is looking to

replace one engine and make some upgrades to the firehall. The specifics of these upgrades and their estimated cost was not provided.

Based on interviews and meetings, we assess that, to meet the standards for a modern fire department, CVFD will need to replace or retire its current apparatus within 10 years. This includes the pumper/engine, pumper/tanker and rescue truck. CVFD has just received a new First Responder vehicle from a local company and so will not need to replace this in the near future.

- Our rough estimates of replacement costs are as follows:
 - Replacement pumper/engine: \$750,000.
 - Replacement pumper/tanker: \$750,000.
 - Replacement rescue truck: \$175,000.
- Although CVFD's 30 sets of turnout gear are reportedly almost all newer than 10 years old, in another ten years, we expect all of these sets should be replaced:
 - 30 sets of gear at \$5,000 per set: \$150,000.

We estimate CVFD's major costs just for apparatus and turnout gear at approximately \$1.8 million over 10 years. In other words, the outlay for equipment and apparatus replacement needed over the next decade will average about \$180,000 per year. This number does not include any other equipment that may need replacement, or any facility maintenance or upgrades.

- **CVFD estimated per-year expenses – next 10 years:**

Combining the two above cost estimates – average yearly operating costs, plus anticipated major capital investment costs – yields an **average yearly cost to operate CVFD of approximately \$290,000 per year, over the next 10 years**, including the cost of investment in needed upgrades.

As noted above, because CVFD did not provide a detailed breakdown of projected cost information, this estimate is likely on the low side.

Funding these costs

Grants from various sources, and state and federal funding, may pay for all or some of the apparatus or gear costs, as they have in the past, but neither department can count on receiving these funds.

Likewise, as the reserve funds for each department are limited and fundraising/other income is modest for CVFD (\$4,000 to \$12,000 per year during the three-year period reviewed) and LFD (\$800 to \$5,000 per year during the three-year period reviewed),

the expectation must be that the bulk of these expenses will have to be funded by local taxpayers.

Tension & Unification

There is a history of tension and competition between the two departments and ill feelings remain in some current members. Some members of both departments spoke openly about this conflict and stated that they saw limited possibilities for a merger, given some of the current conflict and personalities. This means that in the event of a merger or unification, some members of the current departments are likely to resign from fire service rather than serve in a joint department. This also raises challenges with a unified command structure: it is not clear whether either department would be happy with having members of the other department in their command structure.

Area Apparatus Needs

On the EMS side, CVFD's ability to provide BLS first response is valuable to the community, and we recommend that this capacity be retained in any future configuration.

On the fire side, currently, combining the resources of both LFD and CVFD, the Leicester Town and Village area is covered for fire incidents by three pumper/engines, a mini-pumper, one pumper/tanker, and one rescue truck.

Based on our analysis of call volumes and our understanding of similarly situated departments – those primarily serving areas similar to Leicester's – **we believe the fire suppression needs in the area could be adequately handled with two apparatus: one modern pumper/engine and one modern pumper/tanker.** Modern engines have space for most of the rescue equipment that is currently carried by the rescue truck. If the departments continue to believe that an additional specialized unit is needed for rescue equipment, a heavy-duty commercial truck like an F350 with equipment boxes could be put into this role.

| Combined Apparatus Serving the Area: Current vs. Needed | Current apparatus | Needs replacement in next decade? | Projected community need: Reduced Apparatus |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Engines/Pumpers | LFD 2016 Engine/Pumper | No | 1 Engine/Pumpers (keeping LFD 2016) |
| | LFD 2006 Engine/Pumper | Yes | |
| | LFD 2006 Mini-pumper | Yes | |
| | CVFD 2004 Engine/Pumper | Yes | |
| Tanker/Pumper | CVFD 1996 Tanker/Pumper | Yes | 1 Tanker/Pumper |
| Rescue Truck | CVFD 2006 Rescue Truck | Maybe | Possibly 1 light truck w/ equipment boxes |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| | | | |
| First Response Vehicle | EMS First Response Chevy Tahoe | Yes | 1 EMS Response Vehicle |

This reduction in the amount of collective apparatus serving the Leicester community would reduce overall community costs, going forward.

(Note: When this report refers to “new” apparatus, it means ‘new’ to the local fire department, not necessarily “brand new”. In most cases, more modern but used apparatus may be sufficient for needs and less costly.)

Additional Observations

LFD and CVFD have strengths in apparatus and first-line response, but do not by themselves have significant depth in reserve equipment. As well, while both departments anecdotally report enthusiastic membership, both have issues with record-keeping and tracking activities.

Training is another deficiency – standards and by-laws are not up to date, and some senior members, especially, may not be keeping up with required training. It is a common complaint among volunteer fire companies across NYS that training requirements are burdensome and are driving volunteers away. While there may be truth to this, it is not foreseeable that NYS will lower the training requirements. Therefore, members of volunteer companies must conform to the requirements or choose to leave service. Choosing to ignore some requirements, even if they are excessive, is not a valid long-term strategy, and may open the community to possible liability implications in the future.

Options For Improving Fire Service

There are a range of possible options that can be considered, but at the heart of the matter, we identify three distinct, but related, questions:

1. ***What is the right number of departments to have?*** (I.e.: What is the right number of organizations, fire stations, equipment and apparatus needed to adequately provide fire suppression service to the Village and Town of Leicester?) This includes determining how many departments/companies it is efficient to have and how many independent departments/companies the community wants to keep supporting.
2. ***What governance structure is best for the fire departments?*** This question concerns whether the departments should exist under municipal oversight or in an independent fire district.
3. ***How much is the community willing to spend to support the fire departments?*** Historically, the Town and Village have invested what they feel that they can without overburdening the community, but this amount of money is no longer enough to support a modern fire department – even for fully volunteer departments in rural areas.

The first two questions can be answered through a number of possible configurations. Several possibilities are explored below, including projected long-term costs. The question of relative cost is modeled at the end of the options section.

There are three possible primary options for the fire service going forward: 1) maintaining the status quo of two separate departments; 2) selecting a single department to fund; or 3) merging/consolidating the two departments into one and supporting it through a joint fire district.

CGR projects that Option #1, maintaining the status quo, will prove to be the most expensive option over the long term, as it will require modernizing and maintaining the response capability of two departments with overlapping capabilities and equipment.

Option #2 would eliminate the cost of supporting one department, but at the cost of also eliminating the strengths that department would bring to a merged partnership – primarily through its members, but also possibly through some equipment and apparatus, depending on how ownership is ultimately determined and whether the useful assets of the eliminated department are able to be transferred to the remaining department.

Option #3 can have the benefit of maintaining the best parts of each department, in a streamlined, modernized combination. However, it runs the risk of alienating some members who are unwilling to partner with members of the other department for a variety of reasons. This option would also move the fire service expenses into a separate taxing jurisdiction.

It may take some time to decide upon and implement one of the three options for reorganization. We have identified other opportunities for improvement that could be implemented by the departments on their own or in coordination with each other, and with the support of Village and Town governments.

A Note on Projected Costs

Please note that all of the projected costs that follow are based on the assumption that each department will upgrade to the equipment, apparatus and facilities necessary to provide up-to-date fire protection meeting modern standards. It is always possible for the departments to choose to spend less, for instance, by utilizing older equipment and apparatus beyond their recommend lifespan.

This will undoubtedly save some money, but it is not an approach that CGR recommends. While some apparatus and equipment may still be in good shape and will not have to be replaced the moment when they turn a certain age, they will all need to be replaced at some point. Kicking the can down the road simply means that large capital items not replaced in the near future will need to be replaced later, at equal or greater expense. Replacement and upgrading cannot endlessly be deferred. Therefore, we project full costs for modernization in all of the cost estimates below. The projected costs use 2023 dollars and do not forecast the impact of inflation.

Because CVFD did not provide detailed cost estimates beyond apparatus replacement, CGR estimated average annual operating costs of \$107,000, as detailed in Appendix E.

Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo

Maintaining the status quo of two separate departments receiving funding from the Town and Village does not require any specific action from the governing bodies.

The status quo option would entail keeping two departments, with no changes to the current arrangements. The two departments operate under two different organizational structures: LFD operates as a municipal department of the Village and CVFD is an independent fire company funded out of the Town's budget with money collected via the Town's fire protection district, which is a taxing entity under the Town's control. An option is to maintain this status quo exactly as it is, currently.

Pro

- Avoid dealing with a difficult issue; not ruffling any feathers.

- Maintain current volunteer base.
- Avoid the challenge of devising new arrangements

Con

- The current system's cost and the level of funding produced are considered unsatisfactory by all sides:
 - the Town and Village do not like the increasing ongoing expenses, with the possibility of having to cover any overages;
 - the fire departments do not like the limits on funding and the lack of control over their overall finances.
- Both departments will need some significant financial investments in the near future:
 - CVFD for newer apparatus, at minimum.
 - LFD for a new station and updated equipment such as turnout gear and hoses.

Inside the Maintain the Status Quo option, there are two reasonable variations: 1) keeping the current apparatus level as-is, and 2) a minor reduction in the size of the fleet.

Option 1a – Two Separate Depts with Current Apparatus

Option 1a is the option of fully preserving the current status quo. If no changes are made to the current levels of apparatus and the two departments continue to operate separately, as they have, we anticipate the following costs, (which are including the cost of major investments, such as a new fire station for LFD):

| Option 1a: Status Quo + current apparatus | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Option 1a – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of LFD's major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| LFD | \$370,000 | \$3.7 M |
| CVFD | \$290,000 | \$2.9 M |
| Total cost to community | \$660,000 | \$6.6 M |

Option 1b – Two Separate Depts with Reduced Apparatus

Option 1b enacts the plan for reduced apparatus that we lay out in the Area Apparatus Needs section. In this scenario, LFD maintains one pumper/engine (keeping its current newest engine) and CVFD maintains one pumper/tanker – CVFD would not replace its engine or its rescue, in this scenario. We are assuming that LFD would still require a

new station/facility, but if it were only hosting one engine/pumper, plus a smaller support vehicle, its size might be reduced to a two-bay station. Whether this would meaningfully reduce costs is a question that would have to be answered in consultation with an engineering firm.

| Option 1b: Status Quo + <i>reduced</i> apparatus | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Option 1b – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of LFD's major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| LFD | \$290,000 | \$2.9 M |
| CVFD | \$200,000 | \$2.0 M |
| Total cost to community | \$560,000 | \$4.9 M |

Significant issues

The significant issues with either of these options (1a & 1b) is continued duplication of facilities and costs: simply, **it costs more to continue to run two separate departments**. Additionally, the costs for fire apparatus and construction have been undergoing significant escalation in recent years and that is likely to continue.

Operational Improvements under Option 1

One charge of this project was to explore what improved collaboration between LFD and CVFD would look like. There are several areas where the two departments could improve operations while remaining separate departments.

Unified command at fire scenes

CGR was informed that when the two departments work the same fire scene together, rather than acting as one combined force under the direction of a single incident commander, the two departments operate separately, each under the direction of their own respective chief or senior fire officer.

This is contrary to best practice in firefighting, where typically the incident commander is the first chief or command officer to arrive on the scene. While this approach makes sense in terms of gathering information at the scene and preparing the initial attack, in situations of inter-departmental rivalry, there is a concern that departments could compete and rush to be the first on-scene, even if they are not adequately staffed on their apparatus.

Recommendation

There should be a policy for LFD and CVFD on sharing a single incident command. The department should follow the recommendation of the [National Incident](#)

Management System (NIMS)³. This allows all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents.

NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole community with the shared vocabulary, systems and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the National Preparedness System.⁴ NIMS defines operational systems that guide how personnel work together during incidents.

However, acknowledging existing issues of rivalry, distrust, and hesitation from members of each department to work under the command of the other department, these issues need to be dealt with and resolved before a policy on unified incident command will work, or else it will lead to more contention and problems.

Training together

LFD and CVFD should be regularly training together to increase their coordination in responses, including at demanding technical incidents, such as complicated rescue operations.

As well, if both departments offer complementary training refreshers at different times that members of either department can attend, this increases the opportunities for volunteers to stay current on skills. As well, cross-training opportunities should increase familiarity and friendliness between the two departments, helping to break down social barriers. Each department would need to maintain training records on their members including the objectives of the class.

Recommendation

Both departments should open their training sessions to members of the other department and share their schedules.

However, opportunities for cross-training will not work until both departments have equivalent approaches and standards for training that satisfy each other. Training standards should be mutually discussed and agreed upon and based on similar sources of training materials, where applicable.

³ National Incident Management System (NIMS): https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_nims_doctrine-2017.pdf.

⁴ National Preparedness System: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness>.

Building a Cooperative Culture

As the two preceding recommendations make clear, progress in collaboration will require an increased level of trust and commitment to work together first, as a foundation for more complex collaborative efforts.

This means that LFD and CVFD have to agree to set aside past differences and commit to working with each other. This does not mean, however, that legitimate concerns about differences in operation or practice must be ignored going forward. That can be a recipe for allowing some disagreements to fester below the surface.

Rather, the two departments must come to an understanding on common operating standards and common cultural expectations for their organizations and members – for instance, concerning the level of commitment to turn out for calls and attend trainings that will be required.

Steps in this process are explored further in Option 3: “Creating a Combined Department” section below.

Option 2: Support a Single Department

This option has two possible variations: supporting only LFD or supporting only CVFD. Each scenario is making the following assumptions: that both municipalities would choose to support one department, the other department would be closed, and some equipment/apparatus could be transferred from the closing department to the remaining department.

Pro

- This is a more efficient expenditure of public resources.
- Avoiding overlap in large capital expenditures, such as dual stations, overlapping apparatus, etc.
- Eliminating administrative duplication such as training plans, financial management, and supplementary fundraising.

Con

- Losing some investments/capital equipment controlled or managed by other organization.
- Losing some current volunteers.
 - Volunteers are highly dedicated to their current department – likely some number of the members of the closing department would choose not to move over to the other department.

Option 2a – Only LFD remains

Under this scenario, if LFD were selected as the sole department to support, based again on our projected Reduced Apparatus needs, LFD would keep its newest engine/pumper and purchase one additional pumper/tanker. LFD would continue to need the other upgrades specified in their future capital needs plan, including a new station. Some of the major apparatus or equipment that CVFD has would be transferrable to LFD as their equipment was primarily purchased with taxpayer dollars and should be used to benefit the taxpayers.

| Option 2a: Only LFD Remains: LFD 1 pumper/engine + 1 pumper/tanker | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Option 2a – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of LFD's major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| LFD | \$375,000 | \$3.8 M |
| Total cost to community | \$375,000 | \$3.8 M |

Significant issues

The significant issues with LFD being the sole remaining department include the question of 1) how local First Response EMS would be provided to the community, and 2) whether LFD has a sustainable-enough volunteer base to cover all current and future calls for service.

LFD currently does not have the capacity or necessary liability coverage to provide the local EMS response that CVFD is providing.

CVFD appears to have a more robust volunteer base, while LFD's volunteer base may not be growing.

Option 2b – Only CVFD remains

If CVFD were selected as the sole department to support, it would need one newer engine/pumpers, in addition to its one pumper/tanker and potentially a rescue vehicle. **This is based on the assumption that in this scenario, the Village would transfer LFD's 2016 engine/pumper to CVFD, eliminating the need to purchase one new engine.** The Village may also transfer the other assets to CVFD⁵.

It is not clear whether CVFD would need renovations or a new facility to accommodate the extra engine/pumper.

⁵ https://www.afdsny.org/docs/Becoming_or_Consolidating_a_Fire_District_20180210.pdf

| Option 2b: Only CVFD Remains: CVFD projected capital need + 1 engine from LFD | | |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Option 2b – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| CVFD | \$200,000 | \$2.0 M |
| Total cost to community | \$200,000 | \$2.0 M |

Significant issues

If LFD were eliminated as a department, presumably some, but not all, of LFD's existing volunteers would join CVFD. This would reduce the total number of volunteer firefighters serving the community. Any acrimony, personal disputes or lack of welcome extended by the existing CVFD members to potential LFD volunteers is likely to hasten the decline of long-term volunteer viability in the community.

Option 3: Create a Consolidated Department

There are a number of options and possible configurations for a consolidated department. There are two basic approaches to a "consolidated department": either creating a minimally combined department mainly to enable transition of the funding base to a joint fire district, or creating a functionally combined department, where the two existing departments become fully merged. Under Option 2, the operations of a single department operating under municipal contracts was outlined. This option focuses on the option of creating a new Joint Fire District in addition to creating a consolidated fire department.

Villages and towns uniting to provide joint fire service can establish a unique special district called a "joint fire district," that holds many similarities with fire districts, but has some different features because it involves a village. A discussion on the pros and cons is below.

Pros

- From Town and Village point of view, this would be an independent entity that would take funding responsibility off of the Town and Village's books.
- From the fire department point of view, this would allow for more consistent, more adequate levels of funding, as determined by individuals focused on managing the fire service.
- This would allow for cost savings when joint purchases are made for the two departments. This savings could be found in insurance premiums, purchase of administrative supplies, and fire service equipment, computer software just to name a few areas.

- There is a possibility that the merger could end up reducing the number of apparatus and miscellaneous equipment carried by both fire departments. This would need to be studied further if the merger moves forward.
- The Commission of a Joint Fire District could be established in a manner that ensures representation from both the Town and Village, to enhance public oversight.

Cons

- This arrangement will be a separate taxing entity that may end up costing community residents more than they are paying under the current arrangements.
- Deciding organizational and leadership structure is a challenge.

Governance structure possibilities

A joint fire district would combine LFD and CVFD in a unified organization. There can be two separate companies under the joint fire district, but it is one department with a single chief overseeing both companies. This could be a contentious issue in itself, with disputes over who should be chief. One possibility is that this chief could be appointed on an alternating basis: in even years, from one department; in odd years, from the other. Because of the unique nature of a joint fire district, the Town and Village will have the ability to appoint the commission or structure the commission seats so that both the Town and Village are guaranteed representation⁶.

Steps in creation

The specific legally required steps in this process are spelled out in NYS Town Law 11-A.⁷ (They are also available in a more user-friendly format in a publication from the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York⁸). In brief, key steps are:

- 1) A joint meeting of the Town and Village board held in the proposed district territory in which majorities of each voting in favor of establishing a joint fire district. At this point, a consolidation plan would be developed (see the following section for more details).
- 2) Within 30 days of the vote, a public hearing must be held on the consolidation plan, with specific public notice and details given at least 10 days before. The exact details of the public notice requirements are spelled out in the law.

⁶ NYS Town Law 11-A §189-E: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/TWN/189-E>

⁷ NYS Town Law 11-A: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/TWN/A11-A>.

⁸ Guidance on creating a Joint Fire District starts on pg.4:
https://www.afdsny.org/docs/Becoming_or_Consolidating_a_Fire_District_20180210.pdf.

- 3) After the public hearing, the boards shall determine if establishing a joint fire district is in the public interest. If it is, subject to permissive referendum⁹, once the majorities of both boards pass a resolution at any point after the public hearing, the joint fire district is then established. (In other words, if the district is not establishing a Service Awards Program and no voters object by initiating the permissive referendum process, resolutions of the two boards is all that is required for authorization; a separate referendum/public vote is not required.)
- 4) The previous fire protection district must be dissolved by local law.
- 5) The board of fire commissioners will have from three to seven commissioners, who can be either appointed by the Town and Village boards or elected in the manner provided in Article 11 §.175 of Town Law.
 - The determination of whether the board of commissioners is appointed or elected is made during the joint board meeting by resolution adopted at the meeting for the establishment of the fire district.
- 6) The Village will approve the sale or transfer of its facilities, apparatus and equipment to the new district.
- 7) The newly formed fire district must hold a referendum to assume any current indebtedness any of the fire departments/fire companies wish to transfer along with their assets.

Consolidation plan

There are a variety of factors that must be considered as part of a consolidation plan, including forecast cost and savings, the list of assets, the liabilities and the effective date. The consolidation plan, which would be adopted by each of the commissions, would include the following items:

- Name of the new district;
- The boundaries of the new district;
- The new organizational structure including elected officials and number of employees, as well as a transitional plan to move to that new structure;
- The estimate of the cost of and savings of which may be realized from consolidation;

⁹ "Subject to permissive referendum" refers to the ability of members of the public to petition for a referendum under the rules of Article 7 of Town Law and Article 9 of Village Law.

- The assets of each department, include the real and personal property and their fair market value;
- The liabilities and indebtedness, bonded and otherwise, and the fair market value;
- The plan and terms for disposition of existing assets, liabilities and indebtedness of each department, either jointly, separately or in certain proportions;
- The effective date of the proposed joint fire district establishment; and
- The time and places for the public hearing or hearings.
- The consolidation plans are typically developed over a period of months and can be modified after presentation to the public before final adoption by the commissions.

Tax rate

The tax rate for all residents being served by the district could be the same, or different tax rates could be applied in different “zones”, as provided for by Town Law §.176(27).¹⁰

The cost for a combined department depends on the configuration of the new fire department. Key questions include whether the new department would continue to have two separate fire companies, whether they would exist in their own stations or one shared space, etc. The main effect of a combined department would be changes to leadership structure, department identity and funding source (i.e., fire district taxes rather than town & village taxes), rather than any significant changes to the four cost models.

(Possible tax rates based on the options presented here are detailed in the Conclusion section at the end of the report.)

Option 3a: Consolidated Department in Name Only

In the first option, Consolidated Department in Name Only, operating under a joint fire district, the two departments become a single department in name only, but functionally continue to operate as two wholly separate companies, each largely managing their own affairs. A single qualified individual would be named the Chief for the department and would take a largely hands-off approach to managing each company’s internal affairs. The single chief would focus on the broader departmental operations and acting as the incident commander of all fire scenes. Each company would keep a separate chain of command with an assistant chief at the top. This chain of command would be followed if the chief was not available. **In this option, the**

¹⁰ NYS Town Law on fire district commissioners’ powers and duties:
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/TWN/176>.

combined structure would be first step toward creating a functionally combined department and would allow for some administrative tasks to be consolidation.

In this option, LFD and CVFD would both become fire companies within a larger fire department, but otherwise keep their same status quo of separate buildings and apparatus. However, the combined department would have a single chief and at least one full-time or part-time administrative assistant.

This option would have identical costs to Option 1a.

| Option 3a: Combined Dept, Separate Co's + same apparatus | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Option 3a – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| Total cost to community | \$660,000 | \$6.6 M |

Options 3b, 3c and 3d: Functionally Combined Department

A functionally combined department would fully merge the operations of the two existing departments into one unit, with one line of leadership. In this scenario, it would also exist in one location – either in a new, purpose-built firehouse or in CVFD's existing station.

A fully combined department is assumed to offer the following benefits:

- Increased efficiency of operations:
 - One set of paperwork for all functions.
 - One set of office equipment needed.
- Combined resources:
 - All equipment and tools pooled.
 - All reserve funds pooled.
- Reduced facility costs:
 - Consolidation into one facility should lead to reduced maintenance and utility costs.
- Better funding efficiency:
 - A combined department may be able to make a better case to funders and granting agencies to support its increased efficiency, rather than having two separate departments in the area potentially competing for the same grants.

Option 3b: Consolidated department, separate companies, reduced apparatus

In this option, LFD and CVFD would both become fire companies within a larger fire department, with separate buildings and reduced apparatus, fitting with the 1 pumper/engine + 1 pumper/tanker suggestion.

This option would have identical costs to Option 1b.

| Option 3b: Combined Dept, Separate Co's + <i>reduced</i> apparatus | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Option 3b – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| Total cost to community | \$490,000 | \$4.9 M |

Option 3c: Consolidated department, single company, new facility

In this option, LFD and CVFD would join into a single company in the new department, with one new fire station building and reduced apparatus, fitting with the 1 pumper/engine + 1 pumper/tanker suggestion.

| Option 3c: Combined Dept, Combined Co's, New Station + <i>reduced</i> apparatus | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Option 3c – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| Total cost to community | \$425,000 | \$4.3 M |

Option 3d: Consolidated department, single company, CVFD facility

In this option, the new department would operate as a single company, headquartered in CVFD's current facility.

This option would have very similar costs to Option 2b, but it may achieve some cost savings by combining LFD & CVFD's existing equipment.

| Option 3d: Combined Dept, Combined Co's, CVFD Station + <i>reduced</i> apparatus | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Option 2b – Estimated Full Costs (2023 dollars) | Cost Per Year (inclusive of major capital investments needed) | 10-year Cumulative Cost |
| Total cost to community | \$190,000 | \$1.9 M |

Steps to Creating a Consolidated Department

Regardless of the option chosen for a consolidated department, this type of change involves steps that are common to any organizational merger.

Building trust

First and foremost, trust has to be built between both sides. In interviews and during the visioning meeting, members of each department were open about the fact that there is tension between the departments and some members are hesitant about working with members of the other department. A number of interviewees stated that some current members of each department might quit, rather than work in a combined department. In building trust, CGR recommends the following framework:

Town and Village leadership must be clear that the new combined department represents a fresh start, which they will oversee.

- It is time to put aside old grievances and past history, “bury the hatchet” and make a fresh start. The focus is on serving the community, not on any individual egos.
- Assuming this combined department is under a joint fire district, it is recommended that the Town and Village both maintain representation on the board of fire commissioners to ensure that the new department is oriented toward a new future, and not held back by old disputes or old identities.

Trust starts with a unified vision, shared goals, and standard ways of operating.

- What is required from each department is a commitment: *We’re ready to merge, and we’re ready to work with the other department if they’re genuinely ready to do it, as well.*
- There must be unified departmental leadership with a clear, unified vision.
 - The new joint fire district should establish a “mission statement” and utilize it as a guide to build the new department.
 - Initially, it should include representation from members of both previous departments as the members shift to a new, single department identity.
 - As mentioned above, a joint fire district has only one chief, overseeing all operations. Assignment to the Chief position can initially rotate among members of the two previous departments on an agreed-upon basis, as long as each leader works to enact the unified vision and shared goals of the department. There should not be dramatic changes in standards and goals based on who is currently chief.
 - There should not be two different leadership groups, pulling members in different directions.

- There needs to be a single, new department identity that everyone is a part of, with no “Us vs. Them” mentality.
 - Leadership needs to be fair and consistent with all members, regardless of backgrounds or personal connections.
 - No member should be subject to better or worse treatment based on which department they originally belonged to or their relationships to anyone in leadership, etc.
- Members of the two departments, or at least the current leadership, need to come together under the guidance of local leadership and/or the new board of fire commissioners and agree on how they will operate in the unified new department and what their single set of standards will be for all applicable areas of operation.
 - These should start from national and state standards as a minimum base.

Valid concerns about a merger/combination must be separated from spurious concerns and recognized and addressed.

- Valid concerns include establishing shared standards, practices and procedures that meet state and national standards and are fair to all members.
 - Differences between each department’s ways of operating or training standards can be cooperatively examined and reasonable solutions can be found.
 - Standards can be established for how active members must be and up to date on their training. However, the goal must be to preserve as many qualified members as possible, not find people to eliminate.
- Spurious concerns include any personal disagreements or old history, or matters related to personal egos, that would prevent people from working together.

Other Opportunities for Improvement

Adding administrative support

Both departments exhibit some shortcomings in administrative record-keeping. Ideally, a combined department or new fire district would have at least one or more part-time or full-time administrative assistant/secretary, possibly paid. This position would be responsible for helping with:

- Performance statistics:

- Tracking statistics on attendance, training, ISO ratings and collecting all data in an up-to-date, readily accessible digital format.
- Making sure call sheets/run sheets, etc. are up to date and submitted to state or federal agencies.
- Helping draft and keep current key governance documents, like bylaws.
- Making sure compliance with all state requirements is proceeding properly.
- Back-office management:
 - Overseeing, scheduling and tracking purchasing, maintenance, insurance, and all regulatory/state paperwork required.
 - Overseeing day-to-day accounts, in coordination with the Treasurer of the organization.

While this position could be filled on an unpaid, volunteer basis, it would also be reasonable for a Joint Fire District to pay someone to fill the position. We estimate that a full-time worker could be had for \$70,000 a year, inclusive of benefits. A part-time worker could be substantially less.

Contract Specifications

As discussed elsewhere in this report, if either municipality has concerns about the specifics of fire service they are receiving, they have the option of adding particular stipulations to any future contracts. There are both positives and negatives to this approach.

Pro

- Contract stipulations can more clearly lay out expectations, like financial transparency or the necessity of requiring a certain percentage of staff to be active in responding to calls, up to date on training and certified at a certain level – e.g., a certain percentage have to be interior certified.

Con

- There is a balance the municipalities should aim to achieve in maintaining friendly relationships with their volunteer organizations. Overly formalizing or legalizing these relationships can be a misstep.
 - LFC does not currently have a formal contract with the Village, but operates on a tradition of mutual agreement, the equivalent of a “handshake agreement”.
 - If relations are going fairly well and expectations are largely being met, sometimes having fewer stipulations or operating on a “handshake agreement” is the better approach. By contrast, adding a contract or more stipulations may

be read by the volunteer organizations as an indication of a lack of trust. This can affect future relationships.

- Demands in a contract flow two ways. In return for new stipulations, the volunteer organizations can get more specific about additional funding levels, etc.

Capital Planning

- If the Town/Village decide to keep LFD in operation in its current configuration, a new, modern station will soon need to be built.
 - This will likely need to be purpose-built from scratch, or heavily customized from an existing building, as it will need modern firehouse amenities such as vehicle bays, exhaust capture system, gear wash, integrated fire protection system, etc.
 - Based on LFD's projections, we have estimated this cost at roughly \$2.5 million. A more precise cost estimate would require an architectural/engineering study to determine the building design and location.
- CVFD will need some new apparatus in the near future: as discussed below, both the pumper/engine and the pumper/tanker will likely need replacement or retirement in the next decade.

Communication

- Interviews still indicate gaps in radio coverage, likely affected in part by the Leicester region's low-lying geography, which may interfere with radio signals. Re-examine radio issues to see if more repeaters or other booster methods are warranted.
- The Town or Village should specify in their contract or rules for departments they are covering that it must have at least the basic paid tier of a service such as Bryx or IamResponding. Although a free tier does save money, the disruption caused by service interruptions and technical issues is not worth the cost-savings and can also lead to extended response times by the volunteer fire fighters.

Organization

- Specify that the future fire service must systematically track its calls for service, personnel turnout and training requirement fulfillment.
 - All of this should be done in easily-accessible digital records that can readily be furnished to the contracting/overseeing municipalities upon demand. It is no

longer sufficient to be using only paper records to track critical information in the 21st century.

- There are numerous software applications that are available for purchase through the fire service network. These software platforms can provide information on your fire reporting, inventories, training, and personal management records. There would be some upfront costs associated with this purchase, but they would be very beneficial to enhance fire department record-keeping systems.
- Bylaws should be re-written and updated and kept in an electronic document for easy updating. The current process of both departments is to scratch out and write over the text in older paper copies. The current copy of CVFD's bylaws, excepting handwritten additions, dates to 2012, and LFC's bylaws copy dates to 1998.

ISO Updates

It has been nearly a decade since the last Insurance Services Office, Public Protection Classification assessment in Leicester, which apparently only covered the Village. CVFD has been trying to schedule a visit from ISO, but has not yet been able to get a response.

Both CVFD/LFD and the Town and Village should make sure new ISO assessments are conducted in the near future. This provides a standardized measure of coverage and readiness that, via its scoring system, is distinct from, but complementary to, the review CGR performed.

Conclusions

Leicester Town and Village residents have a number of options to choose from and will have to decide which one is most desirable and most realistic. Then, they must hold their leadership and the members of both fire departments accountable for moving forward to enact whatever changes are needed. The overriding focus, regardless of cost or egos, must be on doing what is best for the community.

When assessing the cost projections for various options, a focus on the numbers can distract from a key point: **volunteers are the most important resource** the Town and Village have. This is not just a nice slogan: apparatus and equipment can always be replaced at a fixed cost, but **if volunteer membership critically declines, switching to a full-time career department will be more expensive than all of the other options.**

Therefore, we conclude that ***anything that can be done to sustain and bolster volunteer numbers and volunteer activity and engagement is the top priority, and***

conversely, any plan that is likely to negatively impact volunteer numbers and engagement should be treated with caution.

Potential Tax Impacts of the Options

As noted above, the cost for the fire service is likely to continue to rise. In 2023, via municipal funding, the community spent a combined \$133,000 for the fire service from combined tax revenues. Additionally, both departments also spent reserve funds and revenue gathered from grants and community fundraisers, meaning the total spent to support fire service operations per year was even higher. **However, based on the anticipated fire protection needs of the community, this amount is a substantial under-investment. It will not be sufficient to cover the major investments in new buildings and apparatus that may be necessary in the near future to bring the fire service up to modern standards.**

The grid below shows the current investment and the tax rates that support it and compares it to the anticipated costs of the main Options that have been identified above, and the tax rates they would each require, if all the required funding came from taxation.

In the Options where the governance structure remains with the Town and Village (Options 1 and 2), the anticipated tax costs are split between the two municipalities based on their respective shares of the combined assessed value of the area, with 86% being in the Town and 14% being in the Village.

| Fire Service Option | Costs | Town Tax Rate (per \$1,000) | Village Tax Rate (per \$1,000) | Joint Fire District Rate (per \$1,000) |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Current Costs | \$117,000 | \$0.497 | \$0.333 | n/a |
| Option 1a | \$660,000 | \$3.305 | \$3.416 | n/a |
| Option 1b | \$490,000 | \$2.453 | \$2.536 | n/a |
| Option 2a | \$375,000 | \$1.878 | \$1.941 | n/a |
| Option 2b | \$200,000 | \$1.001 | \$1.035 | n/a |
| Option 3a | \$660,000 | n/a | n/a | \$3.320 |
| Option 3b | \$490,000 | n/a | n/a | \$2.465 |
| Option 3c | \$425,000 | n/a | n/a | \$2.138 |
| Option 3d | \$190,000 | n/a | n/a | \$0.956 |

Deciding between the options is not solely a financial decision. Well-thought-out investment in the volunteer fire service can lead to improved volunteer participation and a safer, more effective work environment. The costs above do not include any potential revenue from grants and assume that debt will be funded and paid back over a ten-year period. Both of these assumptions could change, therefore reducing the

absolute or recurring costs (for example, any grants that are received would reduce the amount community taxpayers would have to fund). Additionally, the community would be eligible for state grants to help support the merger effort should the Town, Village and departments move forward.

Regardless of the option pursued going forward, the community will need to increase the amount of money spent on the fire service to ensure that it is well protected going forward. There are also a number of options that are no-cost or low-cost related to improving teamwork between the departments, developing a better recordkeeping process, and jointly planning for major capital expenses.

Appendix A: Department Profiles

Leicester Fire Department/Leicester Fire Company

CGR met with Chief James Kane, 1st Asst. Chief Donald Kane and 2nd Asst. Chief Jake Post. Additional line officers include a Captain and two Lieutenants. CGR met separately with LFC's President, John Yasso.

As noted above, the Leicester Fire Company (LFC) is a separately incorporated organization of volunteers that staffs the Village's fire department (LFD). LFC is more than a century old, having been established in 1910. LFC is an separate, incorporated company serving the Village, and like many volunteer fire companies in the same position, LFC does not have a formal legal contract with the Village, but operates based on a traditional mutual agreement.

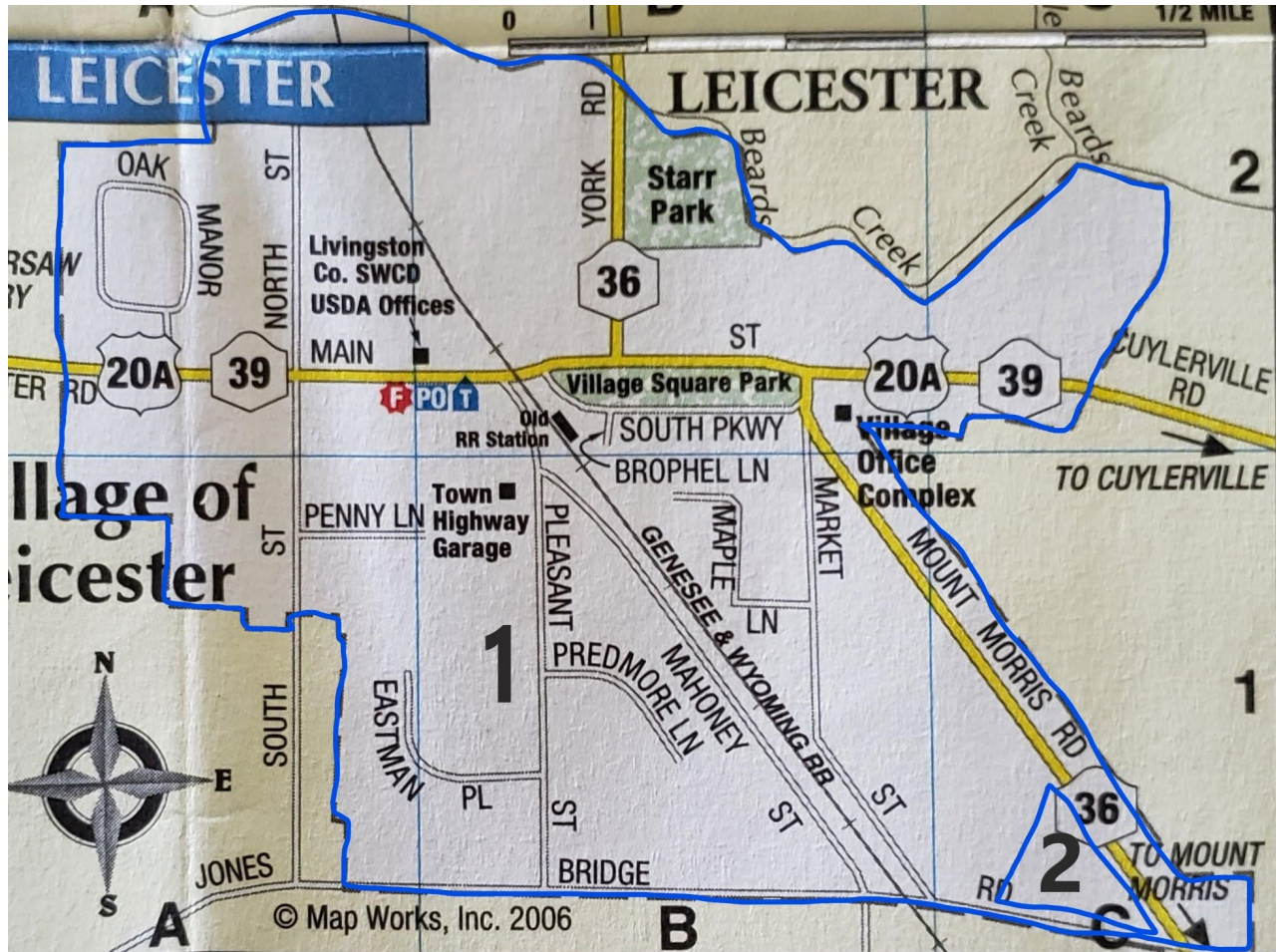
We understand the use of both of these acronyms (LFC & LFD) can be confusing, but the distinction between the two is sometimes important. In this report, we will use "LFD" when we are referring to the entire firefighting organization and any aspects that the Village Department owns and controls, such as apparatus. We will use "LFC" when we are talking about aspects that are under the control of the Fire Company, such as volunteer membership numbers and activities.

Asset Ownership

It is important to clarify that LFD owns almost all assets it uses. The apparatus (fire trucks), station and equipment are owned by LFD. When LFC purchases firefighting equipment, including with its own funds from fundraisers and grants it secures, it turns it over to LFD's ownership. Currently, LFC itself owns some furniture and office equipment in the fire station, plus a small parcel of land in the town. As well, LFC controls some financial assets in its banking accounts and reserve funds, detailed further below.

Fire Zone

Leicester's Fire Zone covers the Village area and, through the Town's contract with the Village, the Town of Leicester.



Map source: Livingston County 911 Center

Interview Points

LFC members raised a number of points during CGR's interview:

- They identified manpower/staffing/membership and finances as the biggest barriers they are facing.
- They believe that LFD should ideally be receiving a budgetary amount from the Village equal to what Cuylerville (CVFD) is receiving from the Town, which would help improve the service they could provide.
 - There is a belief that their department is not receiving the full amount the Village receives from the Town under the contract, although the budgetary details CGR received from the Treasurer indicate otherwise.
- They believe the option of an independent fire district would be the best resolution to this issue.

- They acknowledged there has been a history of animosity/bad feeling between the two departments, and efforts for more amity have failed, so far.
- They feel they are not being kept in the loop on the project.
 - They are concerned about any effort to force a merger or change the structure of the departments.
 - If LFC's membership does not have input into eventual changes, they believe that a large number of members could quit if they don't like the changes.

Fire Response

LFD responded to 74 calls in 2022, and 56 calls in 2023, through October. The largest number of calls, about a third in each year, were for motor vehicle collisions.

Of these, 9 calls in 2022 (12% of all of LFD's 2022 calls) were for building fires; likewise 6 calls in 2023 (11% of all CVFD's 2023 calls through October) were for building fires.

LFD describes typically running out with four to five members on the first truck and two on the second truck, averaging seven members responding to calls.

The specifics of LFD's call types are discussed in more detail in the Calls for Service section below.

Tracking member activity

LFD was able to provide records tracking fire calls and volunteer hours on calls and non-call activities through March 2023.

Records indicate that there were 19 members actively responding to calls from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Of these, 10 members responded to half or more of calls, with the remaining members each responding to less than 30% of calls. Only two members, Jim Kane and Don Kane, responded to more than two-thirds of calls during that period.

Similarly, meeting notes show that out of 27 members listed in LFC, about 14 had been actively attending company meetings through March 2023.

LFD reports that turnout for calls has been relatively stable over the previous four years since 2018, declining slightly from an average of about eight members responding per call from 2018 to early 2020, to an average of about seven members responding from late 2020 to early 2022.

Personnel

| LFC Staff | Number |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Total Volunteer Personnel | 27 |
| Interior Qualified Firefighters | 13 |
| NYS Certified First Responders | 0 |
| NYS Certified EMTs (or higher) | 0 |
| Apparatus Drivers (Engine/Tanker) | 15 |
| Lieutenants | 2 |
| Captains | 1 |
| Battalion/Deputy/Assistant Chiefs | 2 |
| Chief | 1 |

Recruitment & retention

LFD describes manpower as a major challenge and points to the difficulty of recruiting the next generation of volunteers. Young people appear less interested in volunteering and it is hard to retain volunteer members. LFC has had a number of people volunteer for a year or two before quitting. Part of this is due to more eligible people moving outside of the Town to find work. As well, the training demands placed on new firefighters act as a deterrent.

LFD states that it is a gamble to buy turnout gear for new volunteers who do not own a house in the area – it can take nine months to a year to receive gear, and the volunteer may quit or relocate within that time or shortly thereafter.

They report advertising for volunteers in newspapers and on the radio.

There is no Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) program. Members do receive a county tax abatement. The Village is likewise working on a 10% property tax abatement, but the leadership believes that it will amount to too small a sum to make a real difference, and only about six members of the department would have property in the Village eligible for the incentive.

LFD states that the length of state training courses is “killing volunteers”¹¹ – disincentivizing volunteers from advancing in training and fulfilling their requirements.

Training

LFD meets monthly for training exercises. Any kind of continuing training that is not a state-sponsored class is mostly taught in-house by the training officer. Refreshers are offered in pump operations, twice a year, and tool use, extrication, etc. However, there are no annual recertifications done.

¹¹ In contrast, New York State and most firefighting organizations promote the additional training as the best way to keep firefighters and the public safe.

For the period from April 2022 to March 2023, LFD offered 13 training courses in-house. Only four members attended 10 or more of these sessions and only nine members attended at least six of these sessions, with eight members attending between five and one session. Eleven members attended no training sessions.

Firefighters are not regularly exposed to live fire training, which they only receive during the state classes. There is a hope that a new County fire training tower, being built with American Recover Plan Act (ARPA) money, will allow future live-fire training.

Ladder training and SCBA training take place in Livingston County. The County does not have its own fire instructors for required classes; state instructors are used. Classes are described as being readily available, when needed. SCBA Mask fit testing is also handled by the County.

The NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control developed of a recommended set of “Best Practices” should be established for use by the fire departments. The purpose of these “Best Practices” is to assist fire departments in complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) Regulation 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). In New York State, this regulation is enforced for firefighters and public employees. The department’s bylaws should be updated to match the state’s new training program structure and requirements.

This “Best Practices” document is not intended to formulate a regulatory mandate nor is it the purpose of this document to dictate any specific training courses. It is intended to identify “best practices” and core competencies that should be included in all training programs based upon the job duties of individual firefighters. These recommendations should not be considered to be all-inclusive of the subject areas necessary to develop a comprehensive training program, but they will be useful in developing a competent firefighter who can efficiently serve their community.

Officer training

Fire Officer 1 is required for the Line Officers. The Chief indicated that all the fire officers should obtain the Fire Officer 1 certification. Not all of the fire officers have accomplished this yet. There are a total of five modules that need to be completed in order to be certified as a Fire Officer 1 candidate. Current officers are in the process of trying to obtain and be certified in all five of these modules.

Interior training

Interior Firefighting Operations (IFO) or its current state-mandated equivalent is required for volunteer interior firefighters. If not certified for interior operations, the firefighter may choose the Basic Exterior Firefighter Operations (BEFO) certification which will allow them to conduct scene support operations.

Apparatus training

Apparatus operators are required to have Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC) training and Pump Operator training at some point during their driver training status with the department. Drivers will obtain this certification as soon as the county posts the course openings.

Equipment

Turnout gear

LFC reports that 50% of in-service turnout gear is greater than 10 years old. At this age, gear is losing its durability and effectiveness. There are also increasing health concerns related to chemical coatings such as PFAS that are more likely to be degrading on older gear. Any personal protective envelope (PPE) that is greater than 10 years of age should be taken out of service as soon as possible. Additional information concerning the life expectancy of this protective gear can be found in the NFPA standard 1971.

Communications equipment

The two engines carry four portable radios each, and the mini-pumper has two. The Chief and Asst. Chiefs have mobile and portable radios. These portable radios should be utilized exclusively by the interior firefighters riding on the apparatus. It is essential that effective communications is maintained between the interior firefighters and the incident commander at the scene of a structure fire.

Calls are initially dispatched to the firefighters via a one-way, voice-announced Motorola pagers. This is the primary dispatch circuit utilized by the county fire service to notify firefighter of incidents in their jurisdictions. From this point, the fire ground communications is then switched to an Operations channel on the county system for the duration of the incident.

LFC uses Bryx to notify firefighters of an incident, track data and respond to calls. They initially had the free tier of service but had to move to paid service after needing a level of technical support not available for free. This communications method is utilized as a secondary means of notifications to the firefighters.

Equipment testing & status

The pumps were last tested in 2022 and are done every year. SCBAs are tested yearly and the ladders every two years. Hose testing is not done, due to expense.

The supply line was purchased in the 90's. Chief Kane stated that the 5" supply hose needs to be replaced, if money can be found. New 3" supply line was purchased in the spring and will be going on the trucks. Handlines are relaced every 10 years, and they believe the 1¾" line is good.

Apparatus

LFD has three apparatus: two pumpers/engines and a mini-pumper. One engine is only six years old. While two of the apparatus are 17 years old, both look to be in good condition, currently.

However, as noted above and per NFPA Standard 1911, fire apparatus should be taken out of first-line service at 15 years. Therefore, these should be considered for upcoming replacement and a capital improvement program be established to replace these apparatus as soon as financially feasible.

| Type | Designation | Year | Mfr. | Features |
|---------------|-------------|------|--------|---|
| Pumper/Engine | P-135 | 2017 | 4 Guys | 1,250 gal. tank; 1,500 gpm. pump; 1000 ft 5" hose, 400 ft 3" hose, 200 ft 2.5" hose, 350 ft 1.75" hose; 20 gal foam; portable pond; deck gun; rear dump; cribbing, 24, 14, 10 ft ladders; 6 SCBAs, 6 spares, AED, hydraulic extrication tool. |
| Pumper/Engine | P-134 | 2006 | KME | 1,000 gal. tank; 1,500 gpm. pump; 1,000 ft 5" hose, 400 ft 3" hose, 350 ft 1.75" hose, 200 ft 2.5" hose. 20 gal foam, hydraulic extrication tool; gas meter; 24, 14, 10 ft ladders; 6 SCBAs, 6 spares; cribbing; deck gun; rear dump; AED. |
| Mini-pumper | MP-133 | 2006 | KME | 200 gal. tank; 500 gpm. pump; 300 ft 5" hose, 400 ft 2.5" hose, 350 ft 1.5" hose, 400 ft 1" hose; 14 ft ladder, 10 ft attic ladder; 4 SCBAs, 4 spare tanks; AED; Stokes Porta Power. |

Station

The station at 126 Main Street is showing its age. An older, original part of the station, built in the 1930's, constitutes the back, while a front garage area containing the vehicle bays was added in 1976. There is a small office area, bathrooms and a bunk room. LFC built a firefighter's maze on the third floor. The station does not have a gear wash, exhaust capture, generator or security system, or a built-in fire suppression system, but does have a new Breathing Air Cascade System, funded by a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) grant. The station's siren, which is sounded when there is an emergency call, is more than 30 years old.

Budget/Funding

Income

LFD's budget and funding can be broken down into two components – funding from the Village and funding raised by LFC itself.

Village funding income

First is the amount LFD receives from the Village. This is primarily composed of the funds the Town pays for its fire coverage - \$26,000 per year – plus additional grant funding. For the 2022 and 2023 budget years, this has totaled to \$29,000 by the addition of \$3,000 in grants to the Town's contractual funds.

Beyond this amount, the Village covers any additional expenses LFD incurs from its General Fund. This amount has increased sharply over the past three budget years, from approximately \$4,000 in 2021 to \$23,000 in 2023.

In total, the Town contract and Village funding covers about 92% of LFD's operating costs in 2023

| Income: Village funding contribution to LFD | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Grants | \$0 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 |
| Funding from Town Contract | \$26,000 | \$26,000 | \$26,000 |
| Funding from Village General Fund | \$3,956 | \$14,521 | \$22,834 |
| Total Funding from Village | \$29,956 | \$43,521 | \$51,834 |

LFC funding income

Second is the amount LFC raises from its own fundraisers, grant activity and other sources. In 2022, this totaled approximately \$7,000, but will be about \$3,200 in 2022 and 2023 due to a decline in fundraisers and other income.

In total, with the addition of \$1,000 from its general fund in 2023, LFC will be covering approximately 8% of its operating costs.

| Income: LFC self-funding, not including Village contribution | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|--|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Grants | \$1,466 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Fundraisers | \$5,287 | \$800 | \$3,000 |
| Misc. Income | \$110 | \$200 | \$90 |
| Interest Income | \$200 | \$230 | \$175 |
| Other | \$1,747 | \$1,971 | \$0 |
| Funding from LFC General Fund | (\$2,470)* | \$2,445 | \$1,035 |
| Total LFC Self-Funding | \$6,340 | \$5,646 | \$4,300 |

*LFC's income and fundraising generated a surplus in 2021 that was returned to the general fund.

Expenditures

Like income, expenses can be broken down separately into two categories: those covered by the Village and those covered by LFC itself.

Village expense coverage

In the past three budget years, the Village has spent in the following categories:

| Expenditures: Expenses covered by Village expenditures | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|--|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Insurance | \$10,889 | \$11,123 | \$11,658 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Equipment / Apparatus Purchase | \$0 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| Facilities (Heat, Electric, Maintain) | \$8,677 | \$10,736 | \$13,576 |
| Supplies | \$5,000 | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| Phone/Internet/Security | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Fuel | \$1,500 | \$1,700 | \$2,000 |
| Other | \$2,890 | \$3,962 | \$8,600 |
| Total Village Expenditures | \$29,956 | \$43,521 | \$51,834 |

Expenses include maintenance on apparatus and the station and paying for utilities.

LFC expense coverage

In the past three budget years, LFC has spent in the following categories:

| Expenditures: Expenses covered by LFC expenditures | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|--|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Equipment / Apparatus Purchase | \$2,295 | \$1,625 | \$1,500 |
| Facilities (Heat, Electric, Maintain) | \$0 | \$35 | \$0 |
| FF / Fire Related Equipment | \$875 | \$1,311 | \$400 |
| Supplies | \$3,170 | \$2,675 | \$2,400 |
| Total Expenses | \$6,340 | \$5,646 | \$4,300 |

LFC's spending covers such items as office supplies, food for meetings, dues for organizations, small hand tools, cleaning supplies.

Total expenditures

The combined expenditures from Village spending and LFC spending are as follows:

| Combined expenditures | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year | 3-year % change | 3-year amount change |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Payroll Expenses | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Benefits / Workers Comp | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Retirement / LOSAP | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Insurance | \$10,889 | \$11,123 | \$11,658 | 7% | \$769 |
| Equipment / Apparatus Purchase | \$2,295 | \$11,625 | \$11,500 | 401% | \$9,205 |
| Facilities (Heat, Electric, Maintain) | \$8,677 | \$10,771 | \$13,576 | 56% | \$4,899 |
| Admin (Legal, Finance, Secretary) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Training | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| FF / Fire Related Equipment | \$875 | \$1,311 | \$400 | -54% | (\$475) |
| Supplies | \$8,170 | \$7,675 | \$7,400 | -9% | (\$770) |
| Software / Computers | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Phone / Internet / Security | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | 0% | \$0 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Fuel | \$1,500 | \$1,700 | \$2,000 | 33% | \$500 |
| Debt Payments | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Additions to Reserves | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 0% | \$0 |
| Other | \$2,890 | \$3,962 | \$8,600 | 198% | \$5,710 |
| Total Expenses | \$36,296 | \$49,167 | \$56,134 | 55% | \$19,838 |

Overall budget trends

Over the last three budget years, LFD has had a clear trend of increasing expenses, with the overall budget cost growing by 55%. This increase in spending is being covered both by the Village's General Fund and LFC's General Fund.

Notable jumps in expenses came in the categories of Equipment/Apparatus, Facilities, and Other. These three categories largely account for the nearly \$20,000 increase in total expenses from 2021 to 2023.

Fire equipment can be expensive, so these amounts by themselves are not extraordinary. As well, some amount of fluctuation in expenses is normal, and a three-year lookback gives a limited view on long-term trends.

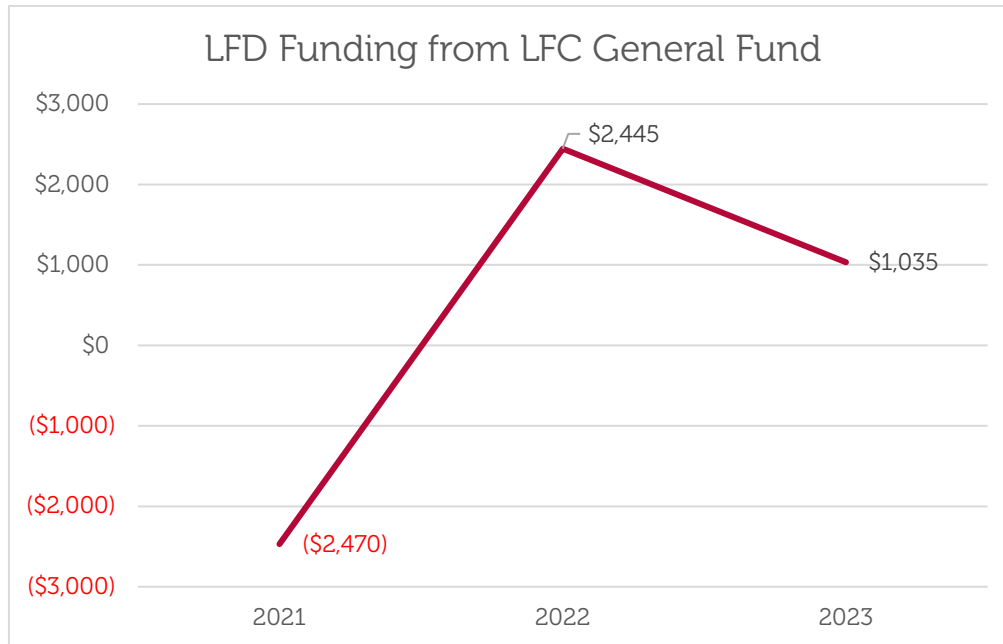
However, a key question is whether these jumps represent one-time/periodic increases, or whether they are part of a trend of steadily increasing overall expenses, which would be a matter of concern.

LFC's President states that most of these expenditures were for one-time/periodic items, like maintenance on the trucks and purchasing a new furnace for the station building. If this is the case, overall expenses should regress toward the mean, returning to average levels, in the next few years.

Contribution from LFC General Fund

In 2022 and 2023, LFC had slight overages to its budget which had to be offset from LFC's savings, out of its General Fund.

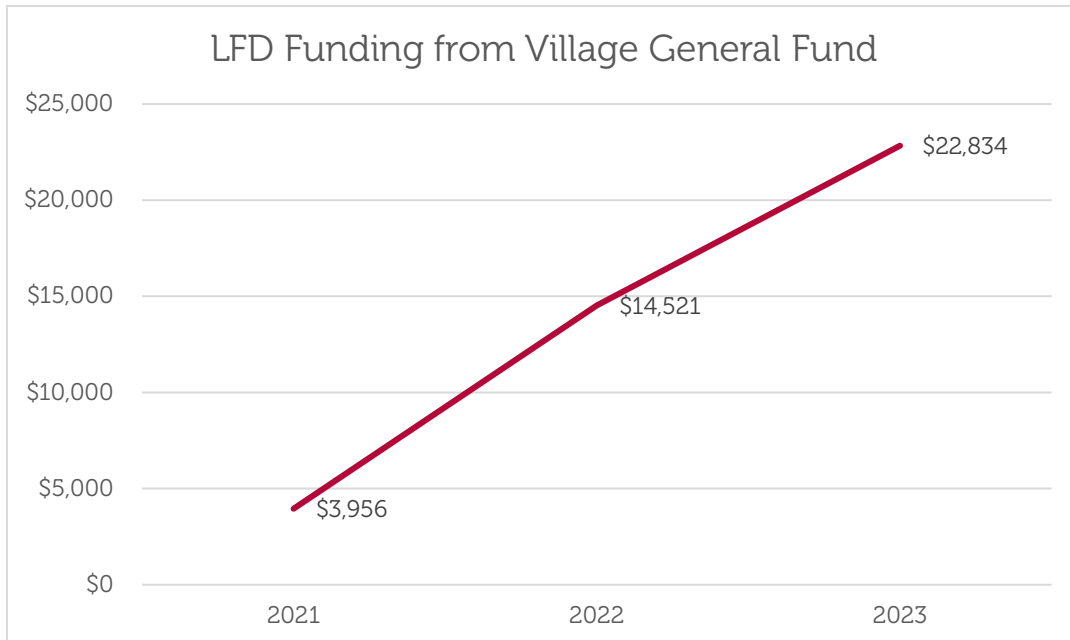
| Contribution from LFC | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| LFC Income | \$8,810 | \$3,201 | \$3,265 |
| LFC Expenses | \$6,340 | \$5,646 | \$4,300 |
| Contribution from LFC General Fund | (\$2,470) | \$2,445 | \$1,035 |



Contribution from Village General Fund

What is not covered by grants and the contractual amount from the Town (\$26,000) comes out of the Village's General Fund. This amount has increased during the three-year period reviewed, and has averaged approximately \$14,000 per year over this period.

| Contribution from Village | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | Projected 2023 Budget Year |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Village Contractual & Grant Funding | \$26,000 | \$29,000 | \$29,000 |
| LFD Expenses (Village Responsibility) | \$29,956 | \$43,521 | \$51,834 |
| <i>Contribution from Village General Fund</i> | <i>\$3,956</i> | <i>\$14,521</i> | <i>\$22,834</i> |



Banking accounts/Reserve funds

LFC currently has approximately \$57,000 in cash assets, including about \$17,000 in checkings/savings and \$40,000 in a certificate of deposit. All funds are from fundraisers and donations. None of the funds are from taxpayer dollars.

Grants

LFC has regularly applied for FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). In the past, they have received grants allowing for the purchase of the Breathing Air Cascade System, the mini-pumper, four sets of airpacks and 10 sets of turnout gear. LFC states they have received over \$500,000 in grants in the last 20 years, with the equipment purchased turned over to the Village/LFD.

However, recent grant applications—including for bottles and airpacks—have not been accepted over the last few years. Some of the grant writing is done internally, and the County has a grant writer that helps, but LFC believe they have been losing on the narrative portion of the grant application.

Community support

LFC believes they have a positive relationship with the community and are known and recognized for their local work and their presence in parades and during Leicester's Field Days.

However, this is not directly translating into a significant level of financial support. LFC has not held a boot drive since before the pandemic. They also find it challenging to hold community fundraisers without an adequate community space: the station itself

does not have the necessary space for community events or fundraisers. When the Boy Scouts occasionally use the fire hall for pancake breakfasts, this is done by pulling the apparatus out of their spaces and using the empty bays to accommodate seating. Also, the fundraising takes time that the volunteers might otherwise dedicate to training or administrative tasks associated with the department.

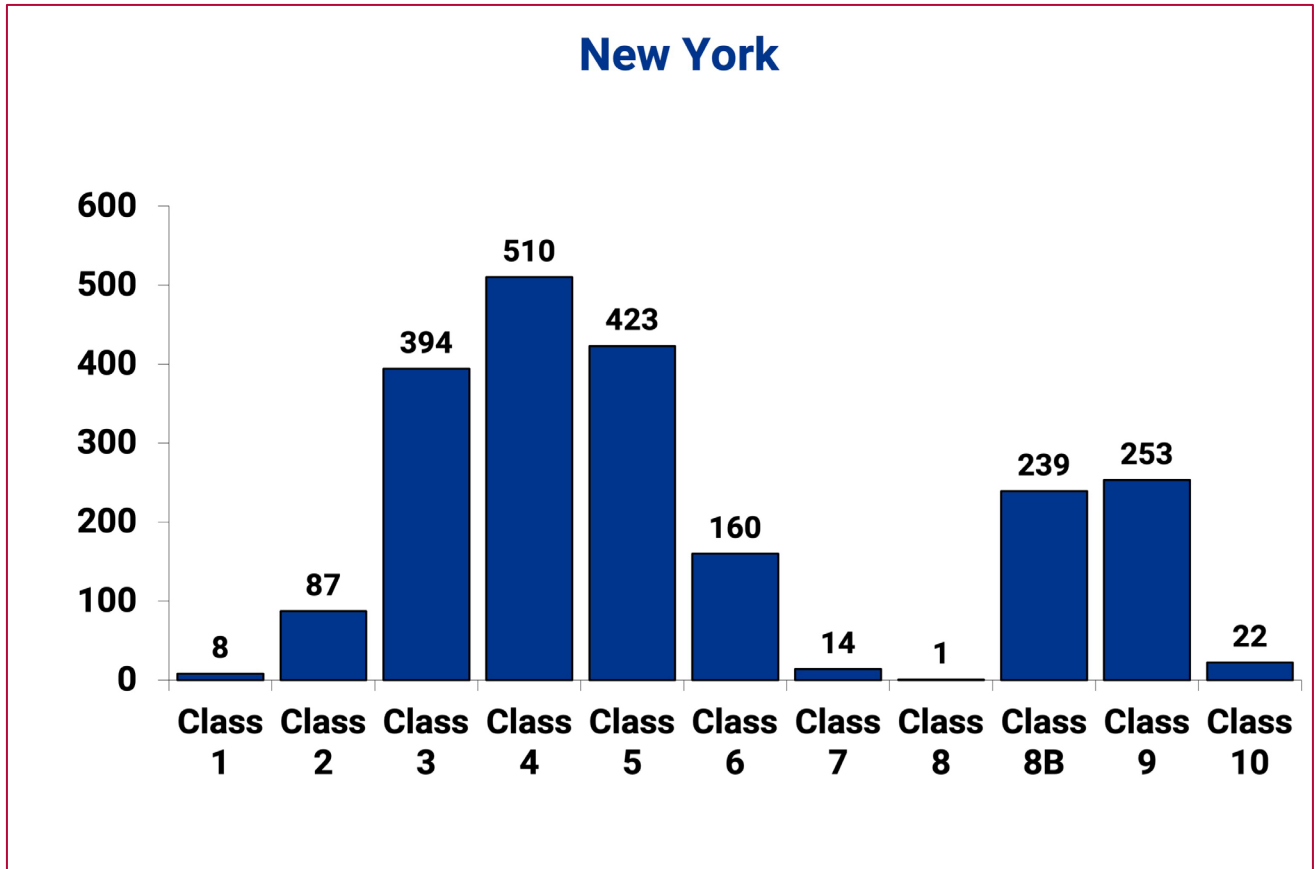
ISO Report

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) last performed a Public Protection Classification (PPC) assessment of the Village of Leicester in 2014. A PPC reviews fire capabilities and produces a set of scores and an overall score that is used by many insurers to assess the adequacy of local fire protection, which in turn affects insurance rates. It is our understanding that this rating covers LFD, but does not include CVFD. Therefore, all scores specific to the fire department itself are taken as scoring LFD.

Scoring

On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is the best grade, the Village received a PPC Class 6 rating. This rating is in the middle of the rating scale, but it does put the Village below the bulk of New York State communities, the largest number of which are ranked between Class 3 and 6. This puts the Village in the third quartile of all NYS communities.

Distribution of ISO PPC Ratings in New York State



Source: <https://www.isomitigation.com/ppc/program-works/facts-and-figures-about-ppc-codes-around-the-country/>

By Area

The ISO assessment focuses on three broad areas: Emergency Communications, covering dispatching and telecommunications, which accounts for about 10% of the score; Fire Department, covering all aspects of equipment, apparatus, staffing and training, which accounts for about half of the score; and Water Supply, covering the supply and hydrant system and testing, which accounts for about 40% of the score. As well, other community risk reduction factors can account for just under 1% of the score.

Emergency communications

- For Emergency Communications, the Village scored a 6.27/10.

While this is a good score, credit was lost for not having advanced telecommunications support, such as limited Voice over Internet Protocol support and Computer Aided Dispatch. Points were also deducted because emergency vehicles did not have GPS/GIS trackers integrated with dispatch to show their real-time automatic

vehicle locations. The lack of Emergency Dispatch Protocols at the dispatch center also reduced points.

Fire department

- For Fire Department, the Village scored a 23.9/50.

Leicester scored well for engine companies and pumper capacity, but lost points for lack of reserve equipment, for lack of ready personnel, and for not meeting training standards. In these latter two categories, Leicester scored especially poorly.

For example, in training, ISO scored 0.14 out of 9 points for training activities with zero credit given in seven of eight training categories, including structure fire training, officer classes, new and existing driver and operator training, haz mat training, recruit training, and pre-fire planning inspections. Not all of this is in LFD's control, as ISO's ideal standards include things like live-fire training at professional facilities that is not always readily available to small, rural departments. Likewise, it is harder for volunteer companies to keep up with regular training sessions to the extent that full-time, career (paid staff) fire departments are able to.

For ready personnel, Leicester scored 3.17 out of 15 points. Ready personnel is a difficult category for volunteer departments to score highly in, as it awards the most points for on-duty personnel, which is typically a career/paid firefighter arrangement and not usually found in volunteer departments. However, ISO gave its score to Leicester based on an average of 9.5 on-call personnel responding to first alarm structure fires in 2014. Currently, LFC reports an average of 7 members responding to calls. This means a current ISO assessment would yield a lower ready personnel score.

Water supply

- For Water Supply, the Village scored a 12.68/40.

Leicester scored well on hydrants, but scored poorly on the supply system, and achieved no points for inspection and flow testing, presumably reflecting the fact that inspection and testing had not been performed within several years of the ISO assessment.

Community risk reduction

- For Community Risk Reduction, the Village scored a 3.20/5.50.

This reflected positive work on fire prevention and code enforcement, fire safety education and fire investigation programs.

Cuylerville Volunteer Fire Department

Similar to LFD, CVFD has a storied history serving the Town of Leicester: it celebrated the centennial of its 1923 founding this past August. As noted above, CVFD is an independent fire company, owning their own land and equipment, that the Town contracts with. This gives CVFD more control over their own affairs and decision-making, and more ability to set their own internal standards.

CGR met with Chief Jamie Watson, 1st Asst Chief Joey Semmel, EMS Coordinator Jennifer Johnson and Lieutenant Brandon Helton of CVFD, along with former Chief Frank Radesi.

Asset Ownership

As noted above, CVFD is an independent fire company, owning their own land and equipment, that the Town contracts with. This gives CVFD more control over their own affairs and decision-making, and more ability to set their own internal standards.

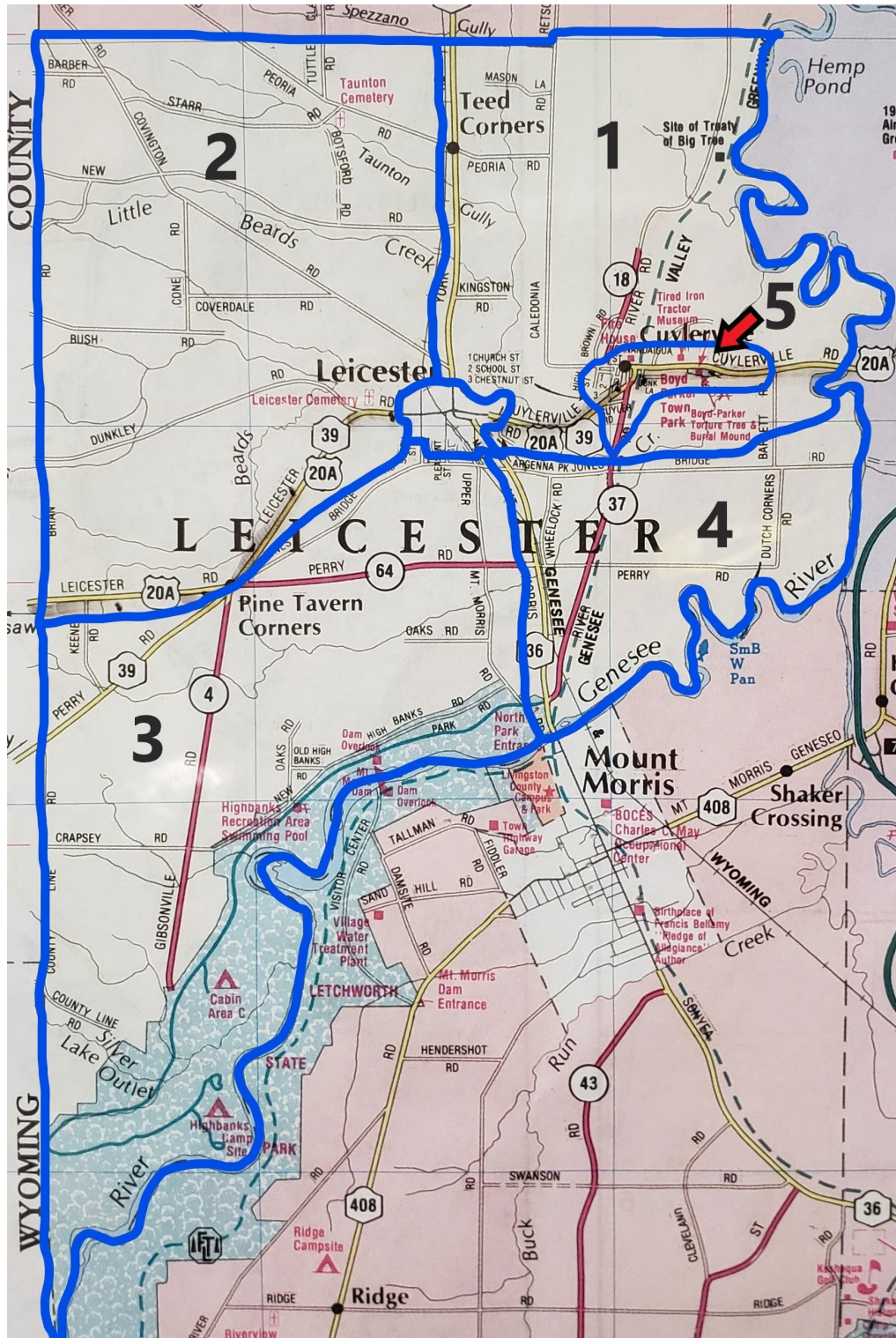
Interview Points

CVFD members raised a number of points during the interview:

- They feel they are constantly struggling for budget, in part because of the costs to the community of maintaining two departments.
- CVFD feels they can handle all calls in the area with their own capacity, without needing a second department.
- Like LFC, they also acknowledged there has been a history of animosity/bad feeling between the two departments, and they believe a merger would be challenging.
- They believe that burdensome state training requirements are partially responsible for driving a decline in volunteer membership.

Fire Zone

Cuylerville's Fire Zone covers the boundaries of the Town of Leicester, excepting the Village area. CVFD also provides stand-by coverage at the local motorsports drag strip.



Map source: Livingston County 911 Center

Fire Response

CVFD responded to 165 non-EMS calls in 2022, and 85 non-EMS calls in 2023, through October. (EMS calls are discussed separately below). The most common call type after EMS was motor vehicle collisions, accounting for 12% of calls in 2022, and 8% of calls in 2023 through October.

Building fires represented 16 calls in 2022 (5% of all of CVFD's 2022 calls), and 12 calls in 2023 (5% of all CVFD's 2023 calls).

CVFD states they will not roll out their trucks until they have a full complement of members responding – three or more on the truck. They are able to track who will be responding via Bryx.

The specifics of CVFD's call types is discussed in more detail in the Calls for Service section below.

EMS Coverage

CVFD operated an ambulance as part of its EMS response until about eight years ago, when the County began its own local ambulance coverage. CVFD was unable to meet the regional guideline for 80% call response rate with its ambulance. They attribute this to a low call volume, feeling they were regularly able to answer about three out of four EMS calls, which still came in under the 80% threshold.

More than half of CVFD's calls are currently EMS calls: 52% in 2022 and 66% in the first 10 months of 2023. Even though the County is ultimately providing an ALS ambulance response and transport for any EMS calls, it is useful and reassuring to the community to have a nearby BLS first response to provide essential care. Likewise, this can increase volunteer commitment and activity, helping volunteers feel useful.

CVFD provides the Certified First Responder BLS EMS in the Town and Village. The Village's current contract with the Town specifies (Stipulation #4) that LFD "shall not render or attempt to render" medical services.

Personnel

| CVFD Staff | Number |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Total Volunteer Personnel | 40 |
| Interior Qualified Firefighters | 12 |
| NYS Certified First Responders | 8 |
| NYS Certified EMTs (or higher) | 1 |
| Apparatus Drivers (Engine/Tanker) | 10 |
| Lieutenants | 2 |
| Captains | 0 |
| Battalion/Deputy/Assistant Chiefs | 2 |
| Chief | 1 |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| EMS Captain | 1 |
|-------------|---|

CVFD reports 40 total members, of which about a dozen joined over the last eight years. CVFD feels that state training requirements – up to 160 hours – are a major impediment to recruitment and retention.

There is no LOSAP program or per-call incentive. CVFD's bylaws were last updated in June 2018.

Member turnout & scheduling

CVFD has an essentially informal system for volunteer commitment, where they do not have requirements for personnel hours or training hours. They stated that volunteers are going to come when they come, so if volunteers are willing to show up for calls, they consider that satisfactory. Volunteer participation is tracked via "run sheets", which each person responding to a call should sign. CVFD was not able to immediately provide a copy of the run sheets.

According to CVFD, the Town has expressed concern with the broad utilization of volunteers and potential burn-out, suggesting that CVFD restrict the number of volunteers who potentially respond to each call, as more than are strictly needed may show up to some calls. However, CVFD's attitude is that if volunteers want to show up, they should be allowed to. They believe this a positive dynamic that bolsters volunteers' enthusiasm, rather than burning them out, and therefore CVFD will not agree to establish restrictions on turnout or call response.

Training

Lieutenant Helton is in charge of enforcing training requirements. Members must be BEFO or CFR-EMT as a condition of membership. Every member has CPR, First Aid and AED training.

Firefighters are not regularly exposed to live fire training. As was also mentioned by LFD, there are complex DEC approvals required to train on burn piles or abandoned buildings that make this very difficult to happen.

The County is in the process of constructing a new Class A burn building at their facilities located in Groveland Station Road in Mt. Morris. This new facility should be utilized on an annual basis by all interior firefighters to enhance their skills when conducting initial fire attack at interior structural fires.

CVFD sets up their own mazes with smoke machines for in-house training.

Officer training

Per CVFD's bylaws, the Chief and First Asst. Chief must have the equivalent of Firefighter I, Incident Command, Pump Operator and Arson Awareness. The Second Asst. Chief must also have all of the above, except Arson Awareness. The First Lieutenant must have Firefighter I and Fire Officer training and must be interior-qualified. The Second Lieutenant must have Firefighter I and Intro to Fire Officer or equivalent.

CVFD stated during interviews that the bylaws need to be updated to reflect changes to the State's training requirements.

Interior training

All interior firefighters have to either have Firefighter I or the older Essentials certification. Related training programs which may address some or all of the specific core competencies, stated above, for interior firefighters include:

1. NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control:
 - a. Firefighter I (Competencies 1 – 21).
 - b. Certified basic firefighter training program under NYS Firefighter minimum training standards (Competencies 1 – 19 of the Exterior Firefighter and 1 – 21 of the Interior Firefighter).
2. NYS OFPC Legacy (Historical) Training recognized as equivalent:
 - a. Firefighting Essentials or Essentials of Firefighting, Initial Fire Attack and Hazardous Materials Operations (Competencies 1 – 21).
 - b. Basic Firefighter, Intermediate Firefighter and Hazardous Materials Operations (Competencies 1 – 21).

Apparatus training

Apparatus operators are required to have BEFO training before they can receive Pump Operator training. All apparatus drivers must be Pump Operator certified, as well.

Specialized training

Specialized training includes Technical Rescue Operations (train crash training and motorsports and fire prevention) as an example.

Equipment

Turnout gear

CVFD reports that only 1% of in-service turnout gear is greater than 10 years old. There are 30 sets of gear available.

Communications equipment

CVFD bought new mobile and portable radios before the County switched to the new trunked radio system. This new equipment purchase will be compatible with the new county communications system that was recently installed.

CVFD is critical of the County's new system, which continues to have dead spots in certain areas. Personnel tell of having to walk a distance from emergency locations in order to get a radio signal. The department has brought this to the attention of the county 911 center and will see if these issues can be resolved.

CVFD uses Bryx on the free tier. They report having regular technical issues, including where the system errors out or does not update or communicate messages when it is supposed to. However, because they are getting it for free, they feel they cannot complain. But this means they are moved to the bottom of the tech support list as they are not paying customers.

Equipment testing & status

Hose testing is done in-house. The intention is to replace hose on a three-year rotation. Most of the 5" supply line was replaced two years ago.

Equipment funding

CVFD has an equipment fund that it tries to contribute around \$5,000 to, annually. But this is not sufficient to cover major capital expenses, like a new apparatus.

Hydrants

CVFD maintains four "dry hydrants" (suction supply points) in the Town, while the Village has a wet hydrant system. The dry hydrant system should be utilized and maintained on an annual basis.

Apparatus

CVFD has the following apparatus:

| Type | Designation | Year | Mfr. | Features |
|---------------|-------------|------|----------|---|
| Pumper/Engine | P-164 | 2004 | Int./KME | 1,000 gal. tank; 1,500 gpm. pump; 1,000 ft 5" hose, 800 ft 2.5" hose, 800 ft 1.5" hose; portable foam; 24 ft roof/attic ladder; 6 SCBAs, 4 spare tanks; AED; thermal imaging cam, EMS gear. |
| Pumper/Tanker | T-167 | 1996 | JC Moore | 3,200 gal. tank; 1,250 gpm. pump; 100 ft 5" hose, 50 ft 2.5" hose, 50 ft 1.5" hose; 2 SCBAs, 4 spare tanks. |

| Type | Designation | Year | Mfr. | Features |
|-----------------------|-------------|------|-------------|--|
| Rescue | R-169 | 2006 | Ford | 10 gal. foam; extrication tools; thermal imaging cam; gas meter; air bags; 4-tank cascade system; blocking; portable foam system; portable lighting; EMS gear. |
| First Responder Truck | EMS-1671 | ? | Chevy Tahoe | EMS gear supplies; Good condition, 100k+ miles. |
| Chief's vehicle | | | | |
| Gator | | | | Medical bed & water tank |
| Snowmobile | | | | Medical bed |

CVFD believes that all of their apparatus will need to be replaced within the next decade.

Station

CVFD's station at 2943 Canandaigua St. is in decent condition. The front portion, including the vehicle bays, was built in 1984, and the back addition was built in 2008. It has a spacious interior that allows for various events to be held in the main hall. It also has a kitchen with some commercial-grade appliances.

The station has a generator and functions as one of the County's designated emergency shelters.

Budget/Funding

Note on CVFD's Budget Records

CVFD shared three years' worth of internal Profit & Loss statements with CGR for analysis. Notably, while over this three-year period, CVFD received an annual allotment of \$61,000 from the Town, in its 2021 Profit & Loss statement, Town contract income is recorded as \$122,000, double this amount (see the Income table directly below).

In conversations with CVFD's new treasurer, Erica Semmel, it was determined that this represented the double-booking of two years' worth of contract payments, both of which had been received within the same fiscal year, in one budget year. As this full sum was recorded against a roughly equal set of expenses, it is not clear whether the \$61,000 contract income recorded in 2022 represents half of the double contract income recorded in 2021, or the next year's payment, recorded early, or a sum drawn from CVFD's reserves, and whether the expenses it is recorded as offsetting in 2022 are also double-counted from 2021, or a new set of expenses. These accounting

idiosyncrasies made it challenging for CGR to develop a clear picture of CVFD's current financial status.

Because of this lack of clarity with the internal records, CGR has also used CVFD's yearly 990 tax returns, which are publicly available, to examine overall budget trends. Those do not contain as much detail on categories of expenditures, but do not have the issue of double-booking contract income in any year.

Detail from the Profit & Loss (P&L) statements is presented first below, then followed by 990 tax return data.

Income – CVFD Profit & Loss Statements

| Income: CVFD Funding from All Sources | 2020 Budget Year | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grants | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Fundraisers | \$2,040 | \$18 | \$3,910 |
| Misc. Income | \$2,539 | \$3,911 | \$8,484 |
| Interest Income | \$12 | \$6 | \$3 |
| Proceeds of Debt | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Sale of Assets | \$1,500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Municipal funding/Town contract | \$61,000 | \$122,000 | \$61,000 |
| Other | \$1,580 | \$1,380 | \$4,815 |
| Total Income | \$68,671 | \$127,315 | \$78,212 |

Town funding income

As of its current contract, CVFD receives \$61,000 yearly from the Town. In 2023, CVFD received an extra \$20,000 from the Town for one-time purchase of essential public safety items. The current contract ends in 2024 and it is not yet known what new amount the Town and CVFD may negotiate.

CVFD reports that the Town has asked for a higher level of information and expenditure oversight in return for the money, such as CVFD submitting purchases for approval and reimbursement. Thus far, CVFD has resisted this demand, feeling it unnecessarily undermines their discretion and autonomy. However, the current contract does call specifically for both "a complete yearly budget for review of anticipated expenses," presumably prior to each upcoming budget year, and "a detailed breakdown of said expenses related to the first response effort at the end of each fiscal year".

If the Town feels that it is not getting the level of detail desired, it should clarify this demand during negotiation of the new contract, however, with the understanding that micromanaging CVFD's budget in operational terms is unlikely to be a good use of

time or contribute to positive relations. The main circumstances in which closer budgetary scrutiny may be warranted is if the Town feels it is not getting a fair level of service or has significant concerns about CVFD's financial viability.

CVFD funding income

In its fiscal year from April 2022 to March 2023, CVFD reported income of approximately \$78,000. With \$61,000 – approximately 88% of CVFD's budget – coming from the Town's contractual payment, CVFD had income of approximately \$17,000 – 22% of its budget – from other sources.

Expenditures – CVFD Profit & Loss Statements

| CVFD Expenditures | 2020 Budget Year | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year | 3-year % change | 3-year amount change |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Unfunded depreciation of truck | \$16,500 | \$16,500 | \$16,500 | 0% | \$0 |
| Buildings & Grounds | \$13,032 | \$35,396 | \$7,924 | -39% | (\$5,108) |
| Equipment/Facilities repair | \$5,995 | \$41,158 | \$18,236 | 204% | \$12,241 |
| Property Insurance | \$13,090 | \$16,257 | \$9,605 | -27% | (\$3,486) |
| Utilities | \$3,857 | \$5,363 | \$6,893 | 79% | \$3,036 |
| Telephone/Telecom | \$1,335 | \$1,358 | \$1,329 | 0% | (\$6) |
| Business Registration Fees | \$180 | \$0 | \$0 | -100% | (\$180) |
| Banking/Accounting Fees | \$168 | \$1,180 | \$625 | 272% | \$457 |
| Outside Contract Services | \$115 | \$300 | \$75 | -35% | (\$40) |
| Fire Supplies | \$13,755 | \$12,109 | \$27,880 | 103% | \$14,125 |
| EMS Supplies | \$608 | \$1,148 | \$2,964 | 387% | \$2,356 |
| Fuel | \$4,515 | \$6,959 | \$11,870 | 163% | \$7,355 |
| Conference/Convention/Meeting | \$819 | \$506 | \$1,939 | 137% | \$1,119 |
| Postage/Mailing | \$105 | \$100 | \$100 | -5% | (\$5) |
| Printing and Copying | \$143 | \$0 | \$83 | -42% | (\$60) |
| Operations supplies | \$0 | \$0 | \$796 | 796% | \$796 |
| Memberships & Dues | \$0 | \$0 | \$760 | 760% | \$760 |
| Awards & Grants | \$0 | \$0 | \$292 | 292% | \$292 |
| Total Expenses | \$74,218 | \$138,334 | \$107,872 | 45% | \$33,654 |

Over a three-year period, overall expenses have fluctuated significantly, nearly doubling between the 2020 and 2021 budget years, and ending 45% higher in 2022. Notable categories increasing include fire and EMS supplies, fuel and utilities. Buildings & Grounds expenses and equipment and facilities repair peaked in the 2021 budget

year and declined in 2022. A key question is whether some jumps represent one-time expenditures or reflecting a genuine increase in ongoing expenses.

990 Tax Returns Budget Data

As a non-profit entity, CVFD is required to file publicly available tax returns every year. These Form 990 returns only show a limited set of information on overall revenues and expenses, without the detail that comes from CVFD's internal records. However, they may more clearly illustrate the overall budget trends by avoiding some of the idiosyncrasies of how CVFD recorded income in its internal records. CGR reviewed five years of tax returns.

| CVFD 990 Tax Returns | 2018 Tax Return | 2019 Tax Return | 2020 Tax Return | 2021 Tax Return | 2022 Tax Return |
|---|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Period | 4/1/18 - 3/31/19 | 4/1/19 - 3/31/20 | 4/1/20 - 3/31/21 | 4/1/21 - 3/31/22 | 4/1/22 - 3/21/23 |
| Revenue | \$66,111 | \$66,978 | \$68,671 | \$66,315 | \$78,212 |
| Expense | \$80,494 | \$74,523 | \$57,718 | \$129,677 | \$107,872 |
| <i>Net Income</i> | <i>\$(14,383)</i> | <i>\$(7,545)</i> | <i>\$10,953</i> | <i>\$(63,362)</i> | <i>\$(29,660)</i> |
| Carryover Net Assets from Previous Year | \$361,492 | \$370,960 | \$363,416 | \$374,369 | \$311,007 |
| Net Assets forward | \$370,960 | \$363,415 | \$374,369 | \$311,007 | \$281,347 |

Overall budget trends

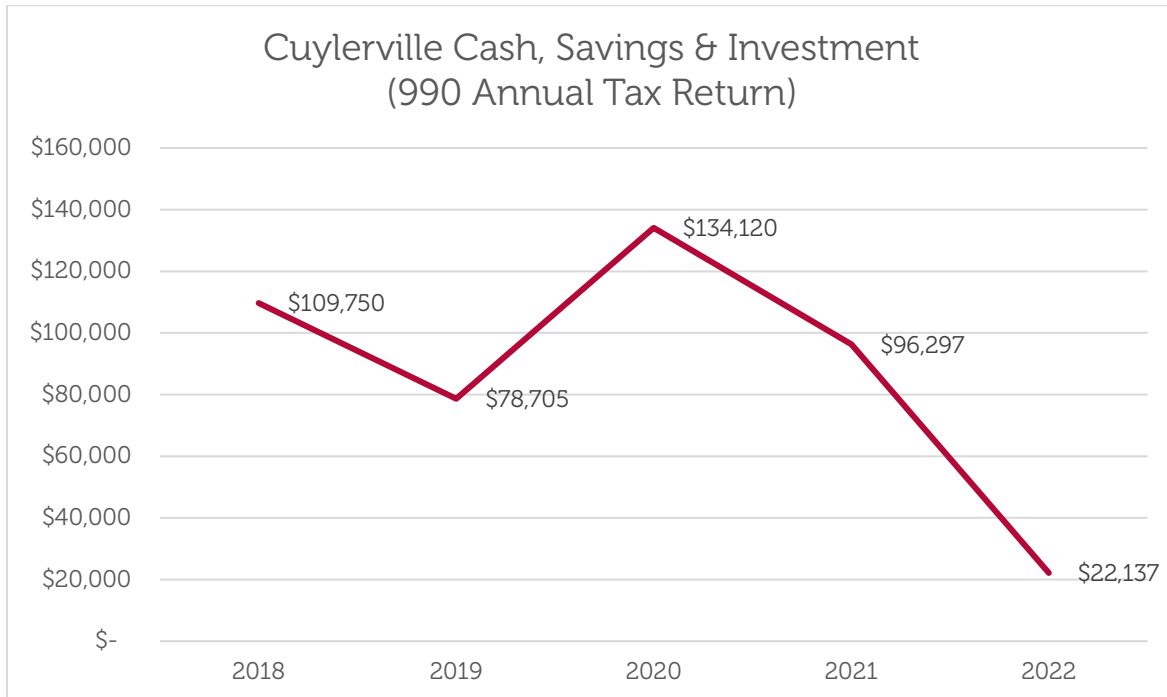
Net income

| Net Income – CVFD Profit & Loss Statements | 2020 Budget Year | 2021 Budget Year | 2022 Budget Year |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total Yearly Income (before funding from CVFD Trust savings) | \$68,671 | \$127,315 | \$78,212 |
| Total Expenses | \$74,218 | \$138,334 | \$107,872 |
| <i>Net Income</i> | <i>\$(5,547)</i> | <i>\$(11,019)</i> | <i>\$(29,660)</i> |

| Net Income - CVFD 990 Tax Returns | 2020 Tax Return | 2021 Tax Return | 2022 Tax Return |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue | \$68,671 | \$66,315 | \$78,212 |
| Expense | \$57,718 | \$129,677 | \$107,872 |
| <i>Net Income</i> | <i>\$10,953</i> | <i>\$(63,362)</i> | <i>\$(29,660)</i> |

Whether using the numbers from either CVFD's internal P & L statements, or from its tax returns, there is a clear pattern of overages in the last couple of year. Per CVFD's

new Treasurer, Erica Semmel, overages are covered by CVFD dipping into its savings funds. This amount is tracked in the 990's as CVFD's Cash, Savings & Investment, and has shown a significant decline in the last couple of years.



Ms. Semmel attributed the roughly \$55,000 increase between 2019 and 2020 to the addition of another early contract check from the Town to CVFD's reserves, although this is not clearly indicated as such in the 990 form for that year.

Based on the savings/reserve fund information presented above, continuing budget overages as CVFD has had in the last couple of years would be an unsustainable trend. There does not appear to be enough in the reserve funds to cover ongoing large overages. The \$20,000 additional funding that CVFD recently received from the Town in 2023 was intended to be a one-time payment, rather than an annual increase. Even if the new contract raises the payment to the \$81,000 per year level, this would not cover all of the recent annual operating expenses, and the overall trend must be reversed to ensure CVFD's financial viability.

Banking accounts/Reserve funds

As of March 31, 2023, CVFD had a total of about \$12,000 in its cash accounts, including a \$6,000 operational account, \$740 in Chief's petty cash, and \$5,000 in an equipment replacement fund. With an additional \$10,000 for prepaid expenses, this constitutes the approximately \$22,000 comprising CVFD's Cash, Savings & Investment, as indicated above.

In other words, while CVFD appears to have some cushion for current operations, it does not appear to have the cash reserve necessary for any major capital improvements or purchases.

Grants

An engine/pumper, some airpicks and some radios were funded through a FEMA AFG grant.

Community support

CVFD holds a number of community fundraisers, which they report bring in around \$3,000 a year, with some variation. This includes spaghetti dinners, a Kid's Day, and a golf tournament. They are planning on a raffle and a pulled pork barbeque as new fundraisers. Additionally, they rent out the hall to various groups.

For other community events, they participate in a Christmas parade and do a Santa and an Easter Bunny.

ISO Rating

CVFD was unable to provide a recent ISO rating, as they have had difficulty scheduling a new review with ISO, despite repeated attempts. They believe the last review may have been done in 2013-14 but were unable to locate a copy of the report.

Appendix B: Calls for Service

CGR analyzed two years of call data from the Livingston County 911 Center. This includes all of 2022 and 2023 data through October 31.

During this period, the two departments responded to 722 calls, in total.

| Total Calls by Department | 2022 Calls | 2023 Calls (thru 10/31/23) | Total |
|---------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Cuylerville | 345 | 247 | 592 |
| Leicester | 74 | 56 | 130 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>419</i> | <i>303</i> | <i>722</i> |

This call total is higher than the number of incidents occurring, because in some cases both departments were called out together to respond to the same incident. Those calls are presented in the Calls Attended Together section below.

Calls by Type

The most common type of call was an EMS call, which was served almost exclusively by CVFD (LFD served three EMS calls in 2022 and three in 2023). The second most common call type is for a motor vehicle collision.

As illustrated in the tables below, a limited number of calls are for working fires. For example, calls for fire alarms that do not turn out to be fires, and other hazardous conditions or other types of assistance needed are usually more numerous than actual fires.

In 2022, between the two departments, there were 49 calls for either building fires, outside fires or vehicles fires – with CVFD responding to 31 and LFD responding to 18 (some of these are a single incident, with both departments responding).

In 2023 through October, there were 27 calls for building, outside or vehicle fires – with CVFD responding to 19 and LFD responding to 8.

CVFD Call Types

CVFD's most common call type is EMS calls, which were approximately half of all calls in 2022 and about two-thirds in 2023. Motor vehicle collisions, building fires, and standby for fire incidents round out the top categories.

| CVFD Calls for Service | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------------|-------|------|
| 2022 | | | 2023 (thru 10/31/23) | | |
| Call Type | Count | % | Call Type | Count | % |
| EMS | 180 | 52% | EMS | 162 | 66% |
| Motor Vehicle Collision | 41 | 12% | Motor Vehicle Collision | 19 | 8% |
| Fire Alarm (700F) | 39 | 11% | Standby (571F) | 19 | 8% |
| Building Fire (111F) | 16 | 5% | Building Fire (111F) | 12 | 5% |
| Standby (571F) | 15 | 4% | Hazmat (400F) | 9 | 4% |
| Hazmat (400F) | 14 | 4% | Outside Fire (160F) | 7 | 3% |
| Outside Fire (160F) | 13 | 4% | Fire Alarm (700F) | 5 | 2% |
| Misc | 7 | 2% | Misc | 4 | 2% |
| CO Detector (424F) | 5 | 1% | Electrical Issues (Ext)(444F) | 3 | 1% |
| Dangerous Condition/Wires | 3 | 1% | Check Welfare | 2 | 1% |
| Check Welfare | 2 | 1% | Dangerous Condition/Wires | 2 | 1% |
| Electrical Issues (Ext)(444F) | 2 | 1% | Service (500F) | 2 | 1% |
| Service (500F) | 2 | 1% | Assist | 1 | 0.4% |
| Vehicle Fire (130F) | 2 | 1% | | | |
| Assist | 1 | 0.3% | | | |
| Drill (900F) | 1 | 0.3% | | | |
| Property Check | 1 | 0.3% | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|------|--|-----------------|-----|
| Rescue (300F) | 1 | 0.3% | | | |
| CVFD 2022 TOTAL | 345 | | | CVFD 2023 TOTAL | 274 |

LFD Call Types

LFD's most frequent call type is for motor vehicle collisions, accounting for about a third of all calls. Building fires are just over 10% of calls, with standby for other fire incidents rounding out the top three.

All call types besides motor vehicle collisions are in the single digits.

| LFD Calls for Service | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----|-------------------------------|-------|-----|
| 2022 | | | 2023 (thru 10/31/23) | | |
| Call Type | Count | % | Call Type | Count | % |
| Motor Vehicle Collision | 23 | 31% | Motor Vehicle Collision | 21 | 38% |
| Building Fire (111F) | 9 | 12% | Standby (571F) | 9 | 16% |
| Standby (571F) | 8 | 11% | Building Fire (111F) | 6 | 11% |
| Hazmat (400F) | 7 | 9% | Hazmat (400F) | 5 | 9% |
| Outside Fire (160F) | 6 | 8% | EMS | 3 | 5% |
| Fire Alarm (700F) | 5 | 7% | Electrical Issues (Ext)(444F) | 3 | 5% |
| Misc | 4 | 5% | Fire Alarm (700F) | 3 | 5% |
| EMS | 3 | 4% | Outside Fire (160F) | 2 | 4% |
| Vehicle Fire (130F) | 3 | 4% | Assist | 1 | 2% |
| CO Detector (424F) | 2 | 3% | Dangerous Condition/Wires | 1 | 2% |
| Dangerous Condition/Wires | 1 | 1% | Drill (900F) | 1 | 2% |
| Drill (900F) | 1 | 1% | Misc | 1 | 2% |
| Electrical Issues (Ext)(444F) | 1 | 1% | | | |
| Service (500F) | 1 | 1% | | | |
| LFD 2022 TOTAL | 74 | | LFD 2023 TOTAL | 56 | |

Calls by Time Period

Incidents by Hour

The bulk of incidents take place during daytime hours, between 8 am and 8 pm.

| Incidents by Hour | 2022 | 2023* | Avg per Month |
|---------------------------|------|-------|---------------|
| Overnight 00:00-03:59 | 35 | 25 | 2.7 |
| Early Morning 04:00-07:59 | 37 | 29 | 3.0 |
| Morning 08:00-11:59 | 103 | 60 | 7.4 |

| Incidents by Hour | 2022 | 2023* | Avg per Month |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Afternoon 12:00-15:59 | 89 | 73 | 7.4 |
| Evening 16:00-19:59 | 102 | 63 | 7.5 |
| Night 20:00-23:59 | 53 | 53 | 4.8 |
| Totals | 419 | 303 | |

Incidents by Day of Week

Incidents are roughly equally distributed across the days of the week.

| Incidents by Day of Week | 2022 | 2023* |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Sunday | 66 | 43 |
| Monday | 50 | 35 |
| Tuesday | 51 | 54 |
| Wednesday | 69 | 42 |
| Thursday | 51 | 38 |
| Friday | 63 | 53 |
| Saturday | 69 | 38 |
| Totals | 419 | 303 |

Calls by Month

There is no clear pattern to the number of calls, by month.

| Calls by Month | 2022 | 2023* |
|----------------|------------|------------|
| January | 33 | 31 |
| February | 26 | 29 |
| March | 34 | 25 |
| April | 32 | 36 |
| May | 37 | 34 |
| June | 48 | 26 |
| July | 39 | 36 |
| August | 31 | 29 |
| September | 13 | 35 |
| October | 47 | 22 |
| November | 47 | |
| December | 32 | |
| Totals | 419 | 303 |

Calls by Location

The following table shows the municipal location of the emergency calls that each fire department responded to in 2022 and 2023 (through 10/31/23), based on data from the Livingston County 911 Center. About three-quarters of all calls take place in the Town or Village of Leicester.

Notable, the number of calls CVFD responded to in Mt. Morris Village and Town dropped sharply from 2022 to 2023. According to Chief Watson, in 2022, Mt. Morris was down a truck, so CVFD responded on all calls with them. Mt. Morris has since gone back to full capacity, and now CVFD only responds to fire calls (structure or outdoor fires) in Mt. Morris, as per the standing mutual aid agreement. Therefore, the smaller number of 2023 calls is likely to better represent the demand CVFD will face in the future.

| Location of Call | 2022 | | 2023 (thru 10/31) | | Totals | Total % |
|--------------------|------|-----|-------------------|-----|--------|---------|
| | CVFD | LFD | CVFD | LFD | | |
| Leicester Town | 193 | 43 | 177 | 33 | 446 | 62% |
| Leicester Village | 38 | 12 | 31 | 7 | 88 | 12% |
| Mt. Morris Village | 62 | 4 | 18 | 1 | 85 | 12% |
| Mt. Morris Town | 37 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 46 | 6% |
| York Town | 4 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 18 | 2% |
| Perry Town | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 1% |
| Caledonia Village | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1% |
| Geneseo Village | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0.4% |
| Groveland Town | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0.4% |
| Castile Town | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0.3% |
| Conesus Town | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.3% |
| Covington | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0.3% |
| Geneseo Town | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.3% |
| Portageville | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.3% |
| Avon Town | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Avon Village | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Caledonia Town | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Dansville Town | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Lima Village | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Nunda Village | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Perry Village | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Springwater Town | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.1% |
| West Sparta Town | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.1% |
| Grand Total | 345 | 74 | 247 | 56 | 722 | |

Calls Attended Together

In 2022, 50 calls were attended by both CVFD and LFD. In 2023, through the end of October, 36 calls were attended by both CVFD and LFD.

By Call Type

About half of the calls attended together were primarily motor vehicle collisions, followed by building fires, fire alarms, and hazardous conditions.

| Call Types | 2022 | 2023* | Totals | Total % |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|--------|---------|
| Motor Vehicle Collision | 23 | 17 | 40 | 47% |
| Building Fire (111F) | 6 | 5 | 11 | 13% |
| Fire Alarm (700F) | 5 | 2 | 7 | 8% |
| Hazmat (400F) | 4 | 3 | 7 | 8% |
| Outside Fire (160F) | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6% |
| EMS | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5% |
| Electrical Issues (Ext)(444F) | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5% |
| Standby (571F) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3% |
| Misc | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2% |
| Dangerous Condition/Wires | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1% |
| Drill (900F) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1% |
| Vehicle Fire (130F) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1% |
| <i>Total</i> | 50 | 36 | 86 | |

By Location

The vast majority of calls attended together were in the Town of Leicester.

| Municipality | 2022 | 2023* | Totals | Total % |
|--------------------|------|-------|--------|---------|
| Leicester Town | 41 | 31 | 72 | 84% |
| Mt. Morris Town | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3% |
| York | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3% |
| Leicester Village | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2% |
| Mt. Morris Village | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2% |
| Castile | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1% |
| Covington | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1% |
| Perry | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1% |
| Portageville | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1% |
| <i>Total</i> | 50 | 36 | 86 | |

By Time

Most of the calls attended together took place during the afternoons and evenings.

| Incidents by Hour | 2022 | 2023* | Avg per Month |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| Overnight 00:00-03:59 | 3 | 3 | 0.3 |
| Early Morning 04:00-07:59 | 4 | 4 | 0.4 |
| Morning 08:00-11:59 | 8 | 5 | 0.6 |
| Afternoon 12:00-15:59 | 11 | 14 | 1.1 |
| Evening 16:00-19:59 | 17 | 7 | 1.1 |
| Night 20:00-23:59 | 7 | 3 | 0.5 |
| Totals | 50 | 36 | 3.9 |

Separate Call Totals

Subtracting the number of calls that both departments responded to together yields a smaller number of calls that each department went on separately.

| Separate Call Totals (no joint response) | 2022 | 2023* | Total |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| Cuylerville | 295 | 211 | 506 |
| Leicester | 24 | 20 | 44 |
| Total | 319 | 231 | 550 |

Appendix C: Town & Village Contracts and Tax Costs

The Town of Leicester has a contract with CVFD via its Fire Protection District to provide fire and first-response EMS service in the Town.

Separately, the Town has an agreement with the Village of Leicester for fire coverage from LFD for any fire scene to which they are dispatched by Livingston County.

Town of Leicester

Contract

The Town operates a Fire Protection District that contracts with CVFD. The fire protection district is for the whole town outside the village. The current contract, which runs through 2024, specifies \$61,000 per year. In 2023, the Town provided an additional \$20,000 as a one-time transfer to cover some essential public safety items. CVFD does not operate an ambulance or transport patients.

Separately, the Town of Leicester pays the Village \$26,000 annually for supplementary fire protection services from the LFC. The contract specifies that the LFC will not attempt to render any EMS services in the Town and will hold the Town harmless for any damage to equipment or injuries to personnel incurred during Town service.

Tax Costs

| Town of Leicester Fire Protection Tax Costs | |
|---|--|
| Taxable Assessed Value for Fire Protection District (2023) | \$175,127,763 |
| Budgeted Fire Expenses to CVFD | \$61,000 |
| Budgeted Fire Expenses to Leicester | \$26,000 |
| Net Fire Expenses | \$87,000 |
| Approximate Tax Rate for Fire Protection in Town Outside Village (per thousand) | \$0.497 (=Net Fire Expense/TAV for FPD*\$1,000) |
| Median Town Home Value (ACS '21)* | \$127,900 |
| Estimated Cost to Median Home in Town | \$63.54 |

* From the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Village of Leicester

Contract

As described above, the Village has an informal, traditional agreement with LFC to staff LFD, rather than a formal contract.

The Village does not have a contract with CVFD, but CVFD will respond to any mutual aid call in the Village, if needed.

The Village spends about 25% of its general fund on fire protection. While there is revenue from the Town to support this expenditure, we using the 25% share of property tax as illustrative of the cost to the property owners.

Tax Costs

| Village of Leicester Fire Protection Tax Costs | |
|---|--------------|
| Taxable Assessed Value for Village (2023) | \$30,333,356 |
| Budgeted Fire Expenses | \$56,000 |
| Revenue from Town | \$26,000 |
| Net Fire Expenses | \$30,000 |
| Share of Village General Fund Budget (estimated) | 25% |
| Approximate Tax Rate for Fire Protection in Village (per thousand) based on 25% of general fund expenses and Village Tax Rate of \$1.33 | \$0.3325 |

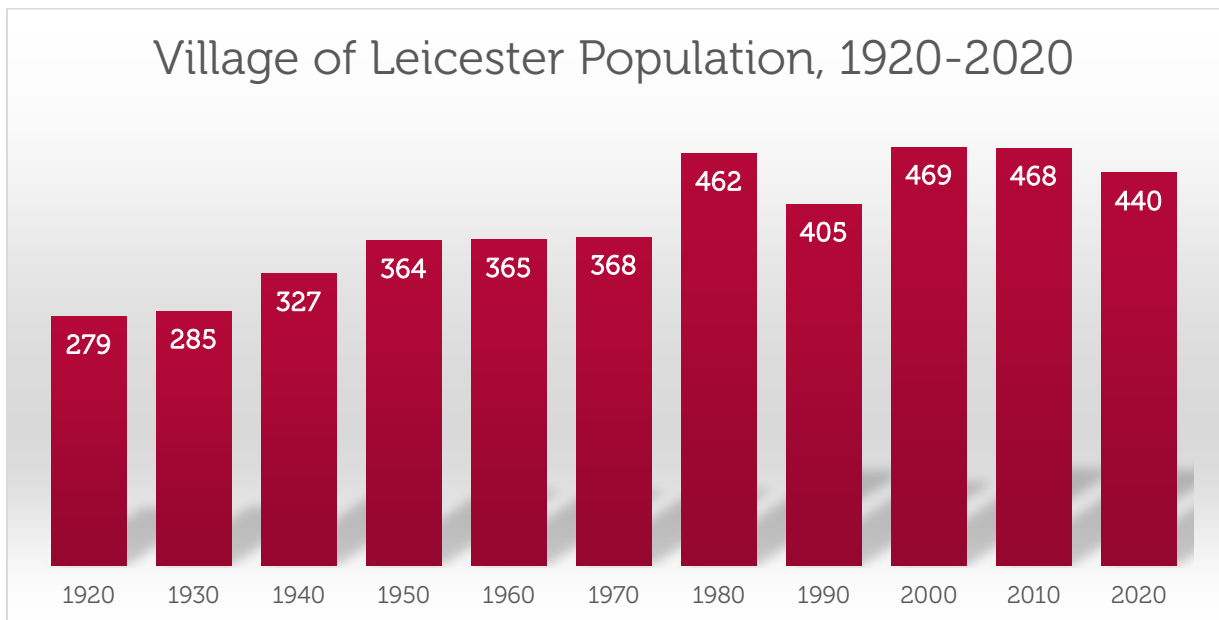
| | |
|---|------------------|
| Median Home Value (ACS '21)* | \$122,200 |
| Estimated Cost to Median Home in Village | \$40.63 |

* From the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Appendix D: Village & Town Demographic Information

Village Demographics

The Village of Leicester has steadily grown over the course of a century, and as of the 2020 Census, was just slightly below its peak in the early 2000's.



The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), which is different than the Decennial Census, offers a more detailed breakdown of Livingston County demographics. (Note: because the ACS uses a different estimation method than the Decennial Census, the total population number is different, a bit higher. While the Decennial Census count is presumed to be more accurate, the most current Decennial Census data does not offer the detailed breakouts by different categories offered in the ACS data.)

| ACS 2017-21 | Village of Leicester |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total estimated population (2017-21) | 520 |
| Male | 243 |
| Female | 277 |
| Under 5 years | 19 |
| Under 18 years | 142 |
| 18 years and over | 378 |
| 18 to 64 years | 299 |

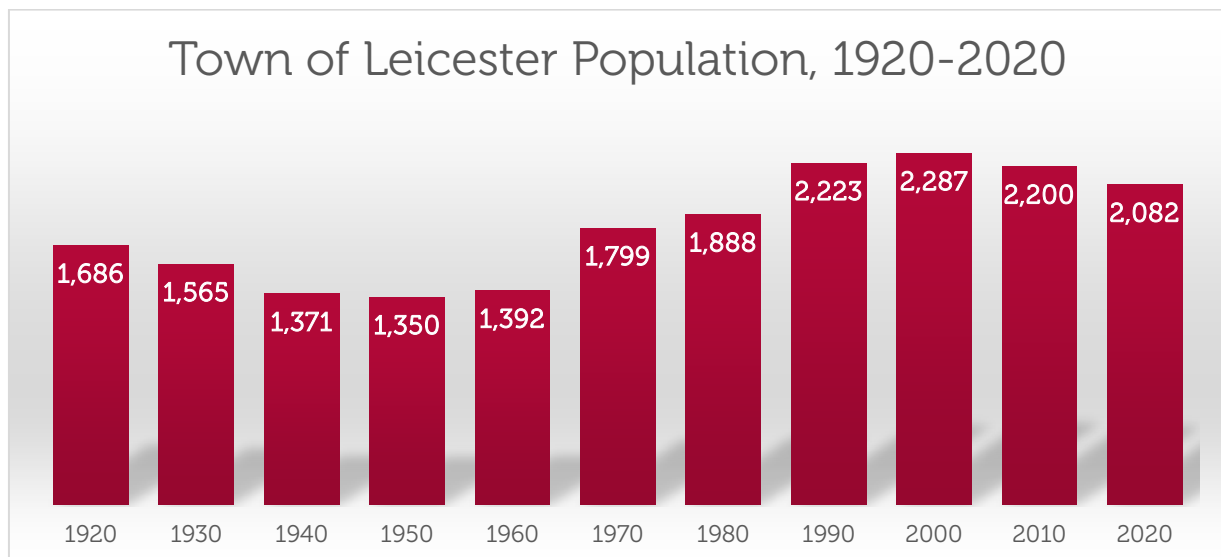
| ACS 2017-21 | Village of Leicester |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 65 years and over | 79 |
| Percent 65 and older | 15.2% |
| 75 years and over | 39 |
| Percent 75 years and older | 7.5% |
| | |
| Median age (years) | 35.6 |
| Housing Units | 202 |
| Median Household Income | \$85,000 |
| % in Poverty | 10.3% |
| Old-age dependency ratio* | 26.4 |
| Child dependency ratio* | 47.5 |

* The old-age dependency ratio is the population ages 65-plus divided by the population ages 16-64. The child dependency ratio is the population ages 0-15 divided by the population ages 16-64.

The Village tends to skew slightly younger than the County in general (which has a median age of 41.7 and a slightly higher old-age dependency ratio). This means that more than a quarter of the population (27.3%) is under 18. This growing cohort of young people may be interested in volunteer service as they become adults, if sustained outreach efforts are made and local fire departments are open and welcoming to any new volunteers.

Town Demographics

The Town of Leicester has grown since the mid-1950's, and as of the 2020 Census, had a modest decline from its peak in the early 2000's. All of the Village's residents are also counted in the Town's figures. The Village accounts for around 1 in 5 Town residents.



As noted above, the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), which is different than the Decennial Census, offers a more detailed breakdown of demographics. (Note: because the ACS uses a different estimation method than the Decennial Census, the total population number is different, a bit higher. While the Decennial Census count is presumed to be more accurate, the most current Decennial Census data does not offer the detailed breakouts by different categories offered in the ACS data.)

| ACS 2017-21 | Town of Leicester |
|---|-------------------|
| Total estimated population (2017-21) | 2,115 |
| Male | 1,102 |
| Female | 1,013 |
| Under 5 years | 72 |
| Under 18 years | 474 |
| 18 years and over | 1,641 |
| 18 to 64 years | 1,531 |
| 65 years and over | 410 |
| Percent 65 and older | 19.4% |
| 75 years and over | 201 |
| Percent 75 years and older | 9.5% |
| | |
| Median age (years) | 41.8 |
| Housing Units | 953 |
| Median Household Income | \$69,797 |
| % in Poverty | 7.6% |
| Old-age dependency ratio* | 33.3 |
| Child dependency ratio* | 38.7 |

* The old-age dependency ratio is the population ages 65-plus divided by the population ages 16-64. The child dependency ratio is the population ages 0-15 divided by the population ages 16-64.

The Town has both more older and more younger people than the County, in general. 22.5% of its residents are under 18, compared to only 17.8% in Livingston County, as a whole. While its proportion of older residents are likely to increase calls for some emergency services, especially EMS services, this younger group of residents offers the possibility of a new cohort of volunteers in the future.

Appendix E: Department 5- & 10-year Cost Projections

LFD Cost Projection

In response to a series of prompts from CGR, LFD presented the following cost projections. This list only represents major categories of equipment and facilities required for fire service. LFD would continue to have other expenses represented in the other categories of its budget outlined in the main report. The projections use 2023 dollars and do not escalate into the future.

| LFD Future Cost Projections | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| Category | 5-year needs | 5-year cost | 10-year needs | 10-year cost |
| Apparatus/vehicles | Refurbish Pump & Valves on 2 trucks. | \$15,000 | 1 Pumper/rescue truck and or Mini pumper | \$750,000 |
| Fire/Rescue equipment | Replace 10 sets turnout gear | \$50,000 | Replace 10 sets turnout gear | \$50,000 |
| Airpacks | Replace 16 airpacks | \$200,000 | Replace 10-20 air cylinders | \$12,500 |
| Radios | Replace batteries | \$1,500 | Replace batteries | \$1,500 |
| Hose | 5" - 2400 ft. @ \$975 / 100 ft | \$2,400 | 5" - 2400 ft. @ \$975 / 100 ft | \$2,400 |
| | 1-3/4" - 500 ft. @ \$250 / 50ft | \$2,500 | 1-3/4" - 500 ft. @ \$250 / 50ft | \$2,500 |
| | 3" - 900 ft. @ \$470 / 50ft | \$8,460 | 3" - 900 ft. @ \$470 / 50ft | \$8,460 |
| | 2-1/2" - 800 ft. @ \$320 / 50 ft. | \$5,120 | 2-1/2" - 800 ft. @ \$320 / 50 ft. | \$5,120 |
| Nozzles | Replace 1-2 | \$1,500 | Replace 1-2 | \$1,500 |
| Exhaust Fan | Replace 1 | \$1,500 | Replace 1 | \$1,500 |
| Portable pond | None | \$0 | Replace 1 | \$1,600 |
| Hydraulic rescue tools | None | \$0 | Replace 1 set | \$5,000 |
| Backup generator | Replace 1 | \$15,000 | None | \$0 |
| Washer & Dryer | 1 set | \$1,000 | None | \$0 |
| Fire station/facility | None | \$0 | New Fire Station | \$2,500,000 |
| Total Cost | <i>Anticipated major costs within the next 5 years</i> | \$303,980 | <i>Additional costs through the next 10 years</i> | \$3,342,080 |
| Combined total: Anticipated major costs over next 10 years | | \$3,646,060 | | |

CVFD Cost Projections

CVFD did not provide CGR with detailed 5- and 10-year cost projections. In a message, Chief Watson indicated that, outside of its typical yearly budget, CVFD is looking to replace one engine at a cost of approximately \$800,000 and make some upgrades to the firehall. The specifics of these upgrades and their estimated cost was not provided.

Based on the national standard that front-line fire apparatus should not be more than 15 years old, to conform to this standard CVFD would have to replace all of its apparatus at some point in the next decade.

We have estimated the following costs of full apparatus replacement:

- Replacement pumper/engine: \$750,000.
- Replacement pumper/tanker: \$750,000.
- Replacement rescue truck: \$175,000.
- CVFD will not need to replace its EMS First Response vehicle, as it has just received a donation of a new vehicle: \$0.

Additionally, we estimated the cost for replacement of turnout gear. Although CVFD's 30 sets of turnout gear are reportedly almost all newer than 10 years old, in another ten years, we expect all of these sets should be replaced:

- 30 sets of gear at \$5,000 per set: \$150,000.

Because CVFD did not provide estimate costs for other items, we used the average of CVFD's operational costs over the 2020-2022 period (detailed above in CVFD's budget section) as a baseline. This three-year period averages to approximately \$107,000 per year as a baseline expenditure level, exclusive of major apparatus and gear replacement noted above.

- \$107,000 average per year of regular expenses.

Appendix F: Changes to Full Report

List of Changes to Final Leicester Fire Services Report – 2.21.24

The following changes were made to the final report based on feedback received on the initial report draft that was circulated to both departments and to Town and Village representatives.

Change: Clarified language and pricing on “Pumper/Tankers”

The previous draft of the report was unclear on the distinction between a “tanker” and a “pumper/tanker”. To be clear: a **tanker** is simply a mobile water supply. It does not have the pumping ability to provide pressurized water for fire suppression. On the other hand, a **pumper/tanker** combines the features of a tanker and a pumper/engine, meaning it is able to pump water for fire suppression. CVFD currently has an aging pumper/tanker that has a 3,200-gallon tank (this is on the larger side for tankers) and can also pump 1,250 gallons per minute. CGR is recommending that CVFD budget to replace this apparatus within the next decade. However, in the previous draft of the report, we estimated the replacement cost at approximately \$450,000, which is the cost of a newer (non-pumper) tanker. A modern pumper/tanker, on the other hand, would likely cost closer to \$750,000, about the cost of a modern engine.

(Note that this is the modeling for a more expensive “dry-side” pumper/tanker, which comes outfitted with cargo and equipment compartments surrounding the tank, allowing it to carry a large complement of equipment and tools. By contrast, a “wet-side” tanker, which is cheaper, has an exposed tank with little-to-no cargo and equipment storage or compartments built into it. We believe the extra equipment and storage capacity of the dry-side model would be the appropriate choice for the Leicester area.)

This additional cost changes some of the previous cost estimates for CVFD.

- Clarified “tanker” vs. “pumper/tanker” and their relative prices.
- Recalculated relevant cost estimates accordingly.

Change: Altered the Reduced Apparatus modeling

In the previous draft, CGR modeled a reduced set of apparatus we believe would be sufficient for local fire coverage. This included two pumper/engines and one plain (non-pumper) tanker. Based on suggestions after the initial draft, we have revised this Reduced Apparatus model to one pumper/engine plus one “dry-side” pumper/tanker. Reducing the fleet size by one apparatus should reduce overall costs, even if the pumper/tanker is more expensive than a comparable pumper/engine might be.

- Changed “Reduced Apparatus” options to one pumper/engine plus one pumper/tanker.

Change: Clarified Town contribution to CVFD

In 2023, the Town contributed an extra \$20,000 to CVFD for the purchase of some essential public safety items, for a yearly total of \$81,000. In an email to CGR, the Town Supervisor confirmed to CGR that the Town Board understood this as a one-time amount, rather than a change to the current contract amount of \$61,000 per year. Notably, the current contract with CVFD ends in 2024, and it is not yet clear what any new contract amount will be. CGR has corrected the current yearly amount and recalculated future costs based on the current annual Town contribution.

- Changed Town’s annual contribution amount from \$81,000 to \$61,000 in the relevant calculations.

Change: Removed cost of CVFD First Response truck

CVFD informed CGR that they have received a donation of a new first response vehicle from a local company. Accordingly, the amount needed for a replacement (\$70k) will be removed from CGR’s calculations.

- Removed new EMS CFR truck from CVFD cost calculations.

Change: Recalculated all cost projections

Based on the four preceding changes, we have recalculated the cost projections for the various options. As the new Reduced Apparatus model now includes one less apparatus, this has lowered the projected cost for the options that use this model.