



RFG Fire Rescue Consulting
Efficiency Effectiveness & Safety
Planning for Local Government

Ron Graner
Public Safety Consultant
19 Gazebo Path
Fayetteville NY 13066

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Final Report
Review of Fire Rescue Stations
&
Service Capabilities
St. James Fire District

St. James New York

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Preface

The St. James Fire District engaged this study of their fire rescue services after many years of internal agency, and community discussion and self-examination into the Effectiveness Efficiency and Safety of their current fire rescue service delivery system. Over a period of years there have been many discussions regarding fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District. Each had the goal to assure the citizens of the Fire District and those who serve as emergency responders of the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Safety of their fire rescue service system.

The St. James Fire District engaged Ron Graner, Public Safety Consultant, to conduct an in-depth review and analysis of all aspects of their Fire Rescue Services. I was not given any directions to reach any specific conclusions in this study. The findings, observations and recommendations in this report are based upon my professional education, training, and experience in the fire rescue services which include being fire chief of 3 large career and combination fire rescue departments and my history as a Volunteer and with Volunteers. We have conducted similar studies in New York, Georgia, Connecticut and California since 2001. In each study we have seen many of the same findings: Service demands are increasing; Taxes are raising; Citizens are demanding more efficient use of their tax dollars; costs for equipment and operations is raising; The Volunteer fire rescue force is aging and shrinking; There are decreasing numbers of younger people available, able and/or willing to Volunteer to serve their community. The New York State Association of Fire Chiefs reported in 2014 that in the last 20 years the number of Volunteer firefighters in NYS had shrunk by over 15,000 Volunteers.

In New York State and in other studies that we have conducted we have found conditions that impact service delivery abilities. This study found many of these same conditions and potential conditions in the St. James Fire District: There are periods of the day when Volunteer staff availability is dangerously low: Time demands on Volunteers has increased every year; Unfunded mandates are impacting the availability of Volunteers and are costing local taxpayers money; Young people are leaving their home communities as they search for lower costs of living, lower taxes and search for jobs; ... and the list of issues impacting the total community goes on and on as does the need for the Community to positively address Effectiveness Efficiency and Safety in the delivery of its fire rescue services.

The goal of this study was to assist the St. James Fire District in its efforts to conduct a Management & Operations review of the resources and delivery of fire rescue services within the Fire District. The initial phase of this study was focused on the issues regarding Station 1 and proposed actions regarding the ownership, use and management of that station. The issues in the total study impact every person who risks their health and safety to serve the citizens of the St. James Fire District as emergency responders. The issues in this study affect the safety and the costs for every citizen in the community. This report presents our findings and observations and documents those findings.

We presented the first part of this study to the members of the Fire Commission on 4/27/18 to provide the members of the Commission timely objective and factual information to regarding district facilities equipment and capabilities for their review prior to their 5/10/18 meeting where the Commission planned on voting on holding a referendum to sell Station 1. That report section contained Strategic and Specific Recommendations that are included in this final report.

Per our agreement the Fire Commission had 10 days in which to notify me of any errors in facts that they might find in that draft report. None were reported.

This final report is designed to guide the Fire Commission and the total community in its fire rescue service Strategic Planning efforts. The Fire Commission again has 10 days in which to notify me of any errors in facts that they might find in this draft final report. Per our agreement we will provide 2 printed copies and a PDF of the final report after the 10 review days. To assist in the planning efforts we will also provide several MS Excel workbooks to the Fire District to help local planning teams track progress on addressing the Strategic and Specific Recommendations and other issues in this report. We will provide similar workbooks to aid in addressing the finding in both the Community Survey and the Emergency Responder/member survey. We also offer the option of further working directly with the Fire District and its planning teams as a consultant to the planning process.

It is our sincere hope that the St. James Fire District, the Emergency Responders and members of the St. James Fire Department, Elected officials and the citizens of the greater St. James and Head of the Harbor community will join together to carefully review this report and that together they will accept and act upon the recommendations that will improve Efficiency Effectiveness and Safety in the fire rescue services of the St. James Fire District.

The driving force in this total study and each of our recommendations are two primary questions:

“WHAT IS IN THE PUBLIC’S BEST INTEREST?”

WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE SAFETY OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONDERS SERVING THIS COMMUNITY?

Disclaimer

The observations, recommendations and opinions presented in this report are our best professional opinions and views based on available information and our personal observations. Of necessity, the author, as do all consultants, must rely on outside sources of information that cannot be totally independently verified. We do not assume any liability for any errors or inaccuracies, or for any actions taken by any party as a result of this report.

- It is important to note that although this report contains many references to NY State and other Laws, we are not attorneys and are not providing legal guidance or advice in this report. The St. James Fire District and the agencies should assure that their actions are guided by attorneys with expertise in the applicable New York State and other laws.

Defining The Character of The St James Fire Dept.

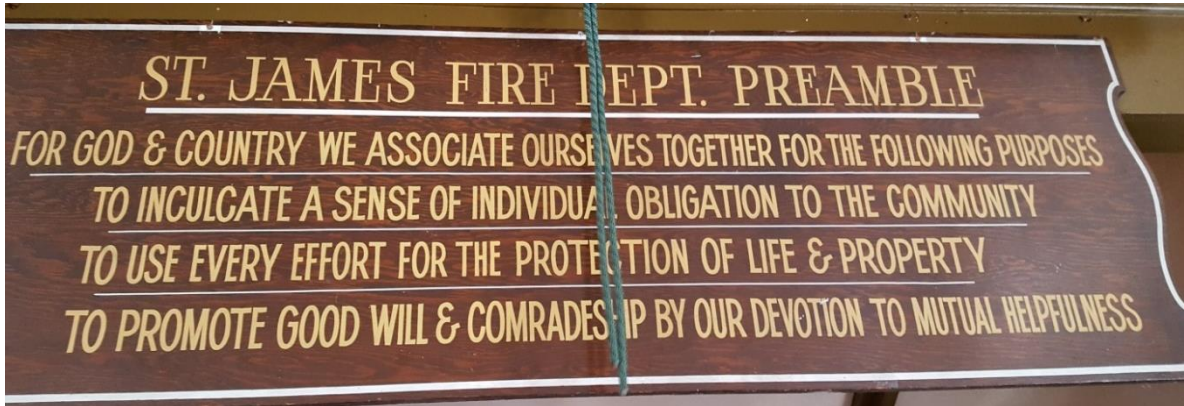


Figure 1: St. James Fire Dept. Preamble On Display In Station 1

The Preamble of the St. James Fire Department sign that hangs over the stage in the large meeting hall at Station 1 was written many years ago by a dedicated group of emergency responders who defined and fully understood the mission of their organization. More importantly they also believed in the very real values that every emergency responder must always exhibit to assure the success of that mission.

To Promote Good Will & Comradeship By Our Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness

These goals and values have set the stage for many years of service to this community by generations of St. James Fire Department emergency responders. While the scope of their services has greatly expanded over the years the goals and mission of this preamble still apply. The expectations for every member of the St. James Fire Rescue Services, both District and Department to “**Promote Goodwill and Comradeship**” are even more important today.

The Fire Department begins each of their meetings by reciting this preamble. I truly believe that the members of the department that I have personally met and those who responded to our surveys believe deeply in the values stated in this preamble. It is the responsibility of Fire Department and Fire District leadership to assure that rules policies, procedures and guidelines that meet the values and mission established in this preamble so many years ago are in place, and are enforced equally and fairly across the agency.

Acknowledgements

We thank all those who contributed to this project. It would have been impossible to conduct this comprehensive study without the assistance, knowledge, skills, and abilities of those who serve and lead in the fire rescue services and the many individuals who provided their thoughts, views, opinions, information and assistance. It would be impossible to thank each person separately in this report because so many saw the need to help the community assure efficiency effectiveness and safety in the delivery of fire rescue services to the public.

We deeply appreciate the assistance and information, materials, survey feedback and support we received from the emergency responders, staff and members of the St. James Fire District and Fire Department. It was an honor and privilege to meet the members of the fire rescue services who attended the responder meeting at Station 1 on April 25 and at other locations during my entire site visit.

The leaders and members of the fire rescue agency provided excellent input and in-depth support for this process. The Fire District appointed District Manager Christopher Gryciuk as the primary contact for coordination of this project. Working on short deadlines Mr. Gryciuk assured that the materials distributed were correct and that the many materials we were seeking were received on time. Mr. Gryciuk also provided me with a very detailed tour of the entire district and the surrounding areas so that I would have a comprehensive view of the fire rescue challenges faced by emergency responders. I deeply appreciate all of his efforts.

Executive Summary

The St. James Fire District Corning is located in Suffolk County New York. The St. James Fire District commissioned this study as part of their efforts to assure Effective Efficient and Safe fire rescue service to the citizens of the St. James Fire District greater community. This study was conducted in two phases. This first phase draft report specifically addressed the issues relative to the fire commission's efforts to examine facilities, apparatus, equipment and staffing of its fire rescue services. We rendered our professional opinions on these areas to the Fire Commission for advisement of their consideration as they worked to meet their timetable for setting a date, or not setting a date, for a public referendum regarding Station 1 and other issues that the Fire Commission needs to address.

This final report includes all of the materials submitted in the first draft report plus more in depth detailed finding and recommendations regarding the delivery of fire rescue services and the needs of the greater community and those who serve as emergency responders.

New York State has in recent years recognized that the long term fiscal survival of New York State depends upon the ability of local citizens and governments to reexamine how their governments at every level operate. There is a growing understanding across NYS that each level of government must recognize that the status quo of governance which was established many years ago is no longer acceptable. The leaders of the St. James Fire District are to be commended for their diligence in self-examination to determine: "What is in the public's best interest?" and: What is in the best interests for assuring the safety of the emergency responders serving the greater St. James community

During my site visit I was honored to meet long term leaders and members of the Volunteer Fire Department and the Fire District as well as some of the District employees. I truly believe that each understands the need for fire rescue services in this community to provide safe, swift and efficient fire suppression, technical rescue, and EMS services. They have each stepped up and worked with their friends and neighbors together to address those needs. Each is rightfully deeply proud of "their fire department". Each still strongly believes the true mission of their fire rescue service. I assure those people who have dedicated their lives in service to the people in the St. James Fire District that this report will focus on continuing their original mission to assure Effective Efficient and Safe fire rescue, and EMS services to this community. I truly respect the values of the people who have served the St James greater community for so many years. I look for those who have dedicated their lives to this mission to continue to support their original mission and values as they and the community work together to address the many changes in the community and its fire rescue services. They all must work together with the greater community to address the realities and challenges of 2018 and beyond.

Over the years the St. James Fire District has seen dramatic increases in service demands. The Fire District has increased the number and the types of services that they provide to the community even as they have faced increased costs and diminished numbers of people willing and/or able to serve as Volunteers. The review of fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District revealed that this community has a core group of extremely hard working and extremely dedicated Volunteer firefighters, and officers. Unfortunately the reality of 2018 is that the pool of people willing and able to serve as Volunteers in the fire rescue services, as is true throughout the nation, is aging and shrinking as demands for service increase. The aging and shrinking pool of Volunteers in the fire rescue services is a reality that must be addressed to assure the community of efficient effective and safe delivery of fire rescue services. Currently the agency

utilizes a cadre of 10 Per Diem employees who work no more than 14 hours per week to provide coverage especially for emergency medical services when there are no Volunteers available.

Our in-depth review of current service delivery and its management structure identified many factors that must be addressed to assure every taxpayer and every member of the fire rescue community that the operation of their fire rescue services will be governed and operated Effectively Efficiently and Safely. Each of the Strategic and Specific Recommendations in this report is crafted to provide the direction that will successfully attain that goal for the greater community. The Strategic and Specific Recommendations in this report are the building blocks for the governance and operational systems for fire rescue services that will utilized to plan the operational changes that will control capital facility and equipment costs, staffing costs and every aspect of fire rescue service delivery.

A primary question for this project was the question regarding the Fire District Commission setting a date for a public referendum regarding the sale of Station 1 to the St. James Fire Department. I examined the sale/purchase agreement that transferred the property from the Fire Department to the Fire District in 2012. I examined both fire stations and other facilities and made an evaluation of views expressed by many people in the community and the fire rescue services. As detailed in the body of this report there are many factors that impact this property and its use now and in the future. I have found nothing that places a time limit for the sale of this property to the fire department or places any restrictions on the use of this property by the Fire District.

As noted in a comment in the community survey we conducted for this study:

“The Citizens Advisory Committee that you authorized has been working diligently to come up with recommendations. You should postpone any referendum on the sale of the 25A firehouse until you receive adequate input.”

Specific Recommendation 1: It is my professional opinion and strong Specific Recommendation that the Fire Commission should Take No Action to conduct a public referendum to sell this property AT THIS TIME.

Taking No Action on setting a date for a public referendum, at this time will allow the Fire Commission the time needed to establish a broad based Strategic Planning Committee to address the findings and recommendations in this report in depth. It will allow the Fire District, the Fire Department and the citizens of the community time to come together to build broad community and emergency responder support for improved efficiency, effectiveness and safety in the delivery of fire rescue services. Not selling Station 1 at this time will also allow the Fire Commission to keep all options for future actions on the table during the Strategic Planning process.

Strategic Recommendation 1: The Strategic Planning Committee should be composed of members of the Community, Emergency Responders, Fire Department and Fire District Officers. *Details of this committee’s composition will be in the body of this report.*

- The recommendation of not calling for a public referendum regarding the sale of Station 1 at this time should not be interpreted by anyone as suggesting that immediate changes in the use of this facility not be made by the Fire District. There are conditions noted in this report that impact public and responder safety and Fire District and Fire Department legal liability. Those issues are detailed in this report and should be addressed immediately and jointly by the Fire Commission and the Fire Department.

The Study Methodology

This study of fire rescue services was conducted for the St. James Fire District.

In conducting research about the department and the community we investigated many sources including local media reports, social media, and internet information on the community, the Fire District and the fire department. Population trends in a community are important indicators for both service demands and understanding the base for recruitment and retention of Volunteer emergency responders. Over the years we have found that an examination of public school populations over a period of years provides a very consistent view of population trends. To accomplish this part of our study we obtained school population reports from both the Smithtown School District and NYS Department of Education public records. We have also examined real estate sales offerings in the greater community to see trends that impact the greater community.

This study included a series of confidential online surveys to gather wide community input. Separate surveys were conducted for: The public; Residents, Taxpayers and Business operators, in the St. James Fire District and Village of Head of The Harbor. Emergency responders, staff and members of the fire rescue agency were requested to take an expanded survey to provide the same basic feedback and in addition each emergency responder and member of the fire rescue services was also asked to provide detailed information regarding their individual: Availability, Capabilities, and Training. They were asked about their needs, current policies and what changes or additional policies were needed to assure the safety of emergency responders and the community based upon the knowledge and experience that only those who risk their lives and safety in service to this community can bring to the table. All survey respondents were asked their views of current strengths weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and challenges. As with all of our internet surveys every participant was assured privacy and confidentiality.

Members of the fire rescue services and elected appointed District officials were made aware of their surveys via personal individual emails. Emergency responders were urged by their chief officers and company officers to provide their honest input. Residents and local business operators were notified of the survey designed for them via the local area media and on the Fire District website.

All survey participants were asked to express their views on what the Priorities for the St. James fire rescue services should be; What the Core Values and Service Priorities of the fire rescue service should be; and what Expectations they personally had for their services. The goal of the multiple surveys was to give the entire community as well as those who serve the St. James Fire District in fire rescue services an opportunity to express their personal views of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats facing fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District from their perspective. Their total feedback gave this consultant a broad community view of current conditions and issues. The feedback from each survey group was examined, compared and evaluated to find similarities and differences between the views of each group. In addition all of those who had received fire rescue services in any of the survey groups were asked to rate the quality of the service they had received.

The leadership of the St James Fire District was given an MS Excel workbook with which they provided detailed information on Facilities, Apparatus, Equipment, Policies, Procedures, Record keeping, District Risks and Hazards preplanning, Training being provided, Staffing counts and Budget. The District provided specific call statistics for the 2017 and 2018 year to date including Mutual Aid. The agency was asked to identify the other agencies that they received or provided mutual aid to/from and the average number of emergency responders to their incidents.

We utilized Google Maps to demonstrate travel distances and times from the two current fire stations to specific response areas and the same system to show response distances for mutual aid companies that are a vital part of the greater community fire rescue service delivery system.

I conducted a two day personal site visit in the community to validate the information received from the many sources and to observe conditions first hand from my perspective as a long term leader of fire rescue services. All of the information previously gathered was reviewed during the onsite visit to each fire rescue station and during tours of the St. James Fire District and the greater community. The findings were used to evaluate fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District as compared to recognized standards. This report contains those findings and our evaluations of them. This report contains Strategic and Specific Recommendations based upon our findings. The goal of this study has been to provide a guide for the community in preparing a Strategic Plan to address the findings and recommendations in this report.

- We will also provide several Strategic Planning workbooks that can be used as Strategic Planning guides.

Our areas of investigation included:

- Facilities
- Apparatus and Equipment
- Volunteer staffing Availability, Capabilities & Training
- Training
- Calls for service
- Response including response times
- Target hazards
- Records management
- Population trends in the community
- Infrastructure,
- Fiscal Considerations
- Organizational structures and effectiveness

Observation: We are aware that some emergency responders did not respond to the emergency responder readiness survey. We did extend the survey deadline date and sent two second chance reminders to those emergency responders who had not responded.

Based upon review of the materials received and our observations on site we feel that the members/Volunteers who did respond represent a significant portion of the total emergency responders. That information provided us with reliable data to generally evaluate total Availability, Capabilities and Training in the St. James Fire District.

The Fire District

Saint James District is a national historic district located at St. James in Smithtown Suffolk County, New York. The district includes 21 contributing buildings, two contributing sites, and one contributing structure. Prominent buildings within the district are the Timothy Smith House (ca. 1800) and dependencies, "Deepwells" (1845–47) and dependencies, St. James Episcopal Church and dependencies, the St. James Railroad Station (built in 1873), and St. James General Store (built in 1857). The newest structure, the 1922 built Saint James Fire Department was also included in the district.¹

The Fire District currently operates from two fire stations. Station 1 is located at 533 NY-25A and Station 2 is located at 221 Jefferson Ave in the St James community. The original primary objective of the Fire Commission of the St. James Fire District for contacting with this consultant was to obtain an objective professional opinion regarding their proposed sale of the property known as Station 1 back to the St. James Fire Department. Prior to disposing of this property the District is required to hold a public referendum vote on that action. There has been some community and Volunteer emergency responder pushback against closing this fire station. To make an evaluation of the facts about fire rescue services in the greater community we examined all Fire District: Facilities, Apparatus, Equipment, Service demands, Staffing, Response areas and challenges plus many of the other factors that must be understood to assure the safety of the public and the emergency responders in the greater community.

Observations of both fire stations by this consultant confirm the facilities condition concerns expressed in the surveys by members of the agency and by the public. Our observations while not at the level of a detailed engineering study generally concur with the general structural issue findings reported to the community by both the Fire District and the elected officials of the Village of Head of Harbor. We also observed conditions that impact the safety of the public and emergency responders and that create a serious potential legal liability situation for the Fire District and the Fire Department.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_James_District

Station 1



Figure 2: St James Fire Department 533 NY-25A Built 1922

Station 1: The fire station is located on Route 25A and Lake Avenue South. This structure was built in 1922 and is one of several buildings in the community that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States of America. Although the structure has been modified in recent years it still retains historical significance. As an important structural landmark in the community it should be preserved to help retain the character of the community as a whole.

The Saint James Fire Department on New York State Route 25A and Lake Avenue South in Saint James, New York, referenced on Wikipedia as; *“This is an image of the building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States of America. Its reference number is 73001275.”*² I can find no official record that this property is currently registered in the National Register of Historic Places. I was told by several people that the community has not followed up on the initial request for such designation efforts.

Currently this structure is owned by the St. James Fire District. The St. James Fire Department maintains its fire company offices and extensive collection of department memorabilia in the building. The Fire Department contracts to provide emergency responders in the whole of the St. James Fire District. Under its purchase agreement for this property in 2012 the Fire Company retained ownership of all memorabilia and office equipment and office furnishings in the building at the time of sale. In this agreement if the Fire District decides to sell this property the Fire Company has the right to purchase the property for \$500,000 plus the costs of any improvements made by the district above \$20,000. The sale of this property by the Fire District would be subject to a Public Referendum approving the sale.

This structure was built to meet the needs of the community and the fire department in 1922 and updated to meet the needs of both in 1967. There is no question that the needs of the fire rescue services have changed in the past **96 years**. The needs of and for fire rescue services will continue to change and evolve in the future and the Fire District must strategically plan to address both the current and the future needs and demands to assure public and emergency responder safety.

While the Station 1 structure has historic and personal significance to both the community and members of the fire rescue community the primary question for the Fire District is: Does this structure meet the service needs of today’s fire rescue service? If not, what value is this structure to the fire rescue service and the greater community?

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_James_District

I take this opportunity to address the second question first as a specific recommendation because the history of any community, but more importantly the history of an historic community such as St. James, must be preserved to maintain the character that defines the community:

Specific Recommendation 2: Station 1 should be preserved as a community landmark building no matter who owns it now and in the future. If possible this structure should be officially registered as a National Historic structure. Future use of this building under any ownership could include being a local museum dedicated to the history of the community and the fire rescue services in the community.

Station 1 Staffing

The department reported the following information for Station1 Personnel

Department:		St James				
Station #	1			Sex Male	11	11
Total Number of Responders	14			Sex Female	2	2
Rank	Volunteer	Career	Total	Age Range:		
Firefighter /EMT	11		11	18 – 21	0	0
Company Officer	3		3	22 - 29	1	1
Chief Officer			0	30 – 39	2	2
Active Volunteer			0	40 – 49	2	2
Career Staff			0	50 - 59	5	5
		Total	14	60+	4	4
Currently Certified for Interior fire fighting:	11		11			total 14
Currently Certified SCAB	11		11			
Certified Incident Command	6		6			

Percent of Volunteers by age			
18 – 21	0%		
22 - 29	7%		
30 – 39	14%	Age Ranges	
40 – 49	14%	40 to Plus 60	79%
50 - 59	36%	50 to Plus 60	64%
60+	29%		

Figure 3: Station 1 reported staffing

The reported staffing at this station indicates that there are only 14 emergency responders who identify as responding from station 1 including 3 Company officers. On a positive note 11 of the 14 are currently certified to use SCBA, Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and are certified for Interior firefighting.

The age of emergency responders at Station 1 is that 9 of the 14 emergency responders, 64%, are over 50 years old and 11, 79% are over the age of 40. Only 3 emergency responders at station 1 are under the age of 40. These numbers reflect a growing serious issue for staffing response to emergency incidents.

Station 1 Facilities

The department reported the following Station1 Facilities:

	Station 1		Facilities provided in this station		Yes	No
	Yes	No				
Apparatus room: # of bays:	4		Training room		X	
			Officers' room:			X
Apparatus can enter from front and rear doors		X	Kitchen:		X	
Vehicle exhaust system:	X		Recreation areas:		X	
PPE Gear storage area	X		Community use room			X
PPE Cleaning facilities/equipment		X	Restrooms male		X	
Designated Equipment cleaning area:	X		Restrooms female:		X	
Designated EMS equipment cleaning area:	X		Restrooms Common		X	
Logistics supply area Meds and EMS equipment		X	Restrooms Public			X
Logistics supply area Personnel Protective Equipment supplies		X	Shower area Males		X	
Logistics supply area other emergency supplies		X	Shower area Females:			X
Logistics supply area non emergency supplies			Shower area Joint use area			X
IE cleaning/housekeeping supplies	X		Bunk Room:			X
			Individual sleeping rooms			X

Figure 4: Station 1 Reported facilities

Station 1 lacks the facilities needed to meet the service needs of today's fire rescue service. Specifically the following factors are a negative in addressing facilities that meet today's needs:

- The lack of an Officers room;
- Lack of shower facilities for female emergency responders;
- Lack of any type of sleeping spaces for emergency responders which would encourage Volunteers to staff this station overnight or during long term major incidents;
- We did not observe a logistics supply area of any kind
- Location is in an extremely congested traffic pattern area

Structure Observations:

- Exterior: Observed some cracks in rear concrete block walls;
- Peeling paint and general maintenance issues including some possible wood decay.
- This historic structure is not protected by an automatic sprinkler system.
- There is a hole in the ceiling above the rear of Engine 431 that would allow fire to enter the concealed space supporting the second floor
- The emergency backup electric generator is out of service and awaiting replacement by a portable unit
- There are hanging wires in the basement
- The boiler for the HVAC system appears to be old and not energy efficient
- There is a hazardous step entering the kitchen from the bar area
- There is no fire suppression system over the range in the kitchen
- There are accumulations of assorted materials in the unprotected basement
- There appears to be light weight framing in the basement supporting the kitchen area. However that framing may just be forming structure to support the pouring of a concrete floor on the first floor. An engineer would need to determine if the above floor is properly supported or it is supported by this light weight framing.
 - We did not have access to the basement area beneath the apparatus floor to be able to examine condition of the support structure

Specific Recommendation 3: We recommend a detailed engineering study of the entire support structure for the first floor specifically and an inspection by a certified code enforcement official/fire marshal of the entire building to assure compliance with local fire prevention and building codes.

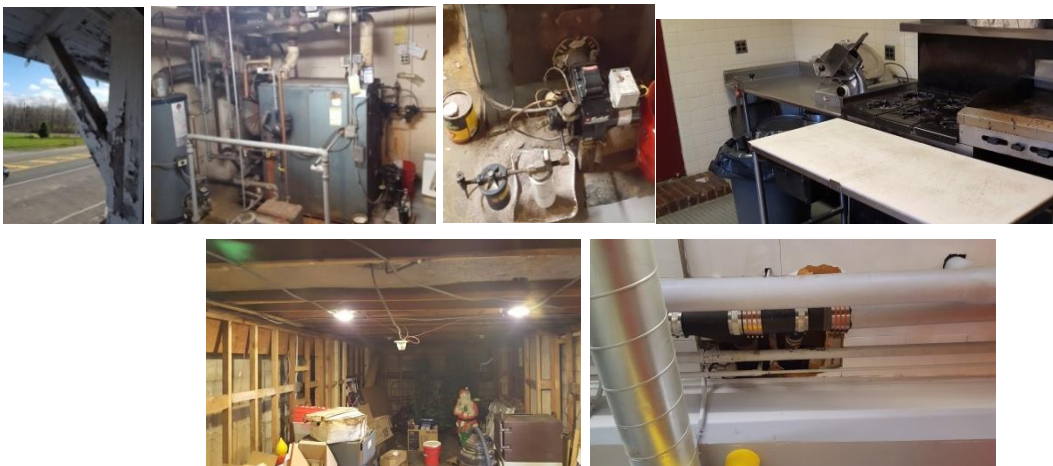


Figure 5: Station 1 Photos of observed Physical Facility Issues

Specific Recommendation 4: We recommend that the ceiling hole above E 431 be fire stopped and repaired immediately.

Apparatus assigned to Station 1

The following apparatus is currently at station 1:

Station # 1								
	Unit Number	year	Miles	Owned, Leased, Lease purchase	Status 1 Front line - 2 Reserve		Pump Capacity	Tank Capacity
Engine	4-3-1	1993	30481	Owned	1	Pierce	1500	750
Brush	4-3-8	2007	2919	Owned	2	Chevy/KM E		250

Figure 6: Station 1 apparatus assigned

All apparatus is regularly serviced and tested and appears to be in excellent and well maintained condition. Engine 431 is over 25 years old but appears to be in excellent condition having passed annual pump tests and mechanical servicing and with only 30,480 miles on the odometer. In the larger question of how many pieces of apparatus the department should operate with and how many pieces of apparatus it should maintained in reserve status, I see nothing that would limit the future service life of this apparatus as a reserve engine for at least the next 5 – 8 or more years.

SCBA					
Total Number of SCBA In Station and on apparatus	7				
Brand of SCBA	SCOTT				
# of Spare Bottles	7				
Air Compressor	None				

Figure 7: SCBA Station 1

Traffic Pattern Station 1

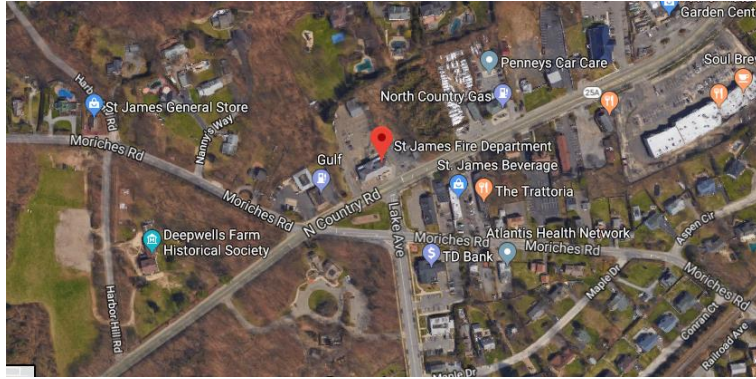


Figure 8 Traffic Pattern around station 1

As can be seen in the traffic pattern photo above this station is located at an extremely busy intersection of several streets including a State highway.

Specific Recommendation 5: If the location of Station 1 is to continue to be utilized as a fire station traffic control signals need to be installed on the State highway and the local approach streets on both sides of the station property. The traffic signals need to be equipped with Emergency Vehicle Preemption Systems to stop approaching traffic and to remove standing traffic from the road areas surrounding this station.

Fire District & Fire Department Liability Potential

Fire Station 1 was built 96 years ago in 1922 during the time of prohibition in American when alcohol became illegal. At that time it was not uncommon to find bars serving alcohol in community fire stations where local authorities looked the other way with a wink and a nod. Many Volunteer fire departments at that time functioned more like private community men's clubs. However, the stations also had a clear a mission to protect the public when there was a fire or other emergency. Socializing with a drink in a private club room of fire stations was common. In 1967 when this station was remodeled the legal drinking age in NYS was still 18. It was common practice for members of fire departments to have a drink in the fire station after training, work details and after participating in social events and parades.

Those days are gone forever. Today the use of alcohol in public building is no longer acceptable. The use of alcohol by emergency responders especially anyone who would drive emergency apparatus or their own vehicles after drinking is now totally unacceptable.

At Station 1 we observed that there is a bar that is frequented by members of the department. We also observed signs that the use of alcohol is not confined to only Station 1. This clearly creates a condition that is contrary to policies regarding alcohol use as defined by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and common sense about what are acceptable practices today.

In a recent protest about the possible closing of this station a local attorney was the spokesman for some of the residents of the community. If there was ever an incident involving alcohol or drug use by emergency responders or anyone leaving any fire station where alcohol was present there are many lawyers who would be in the door step of the Fire District and the Fire Department immediately. They would line up to represent the victims against the Fire District and the Department for allowing these conditions to exist.

The issue regarding having an alcohol use policy for all emergency responders was raised in a number of survey responses from Emergency Responders and members of the community.

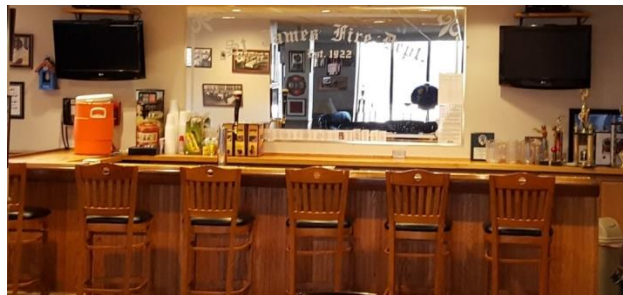


Figure 9: Bar in Station 1

Specific Recommendation 6: The Fire Commission and the Fire Company should immediately order the closing of the bar at Station 1.

Specific Recommendation 7: The Fire District and the Fire Department together should review, revise and enforce policies regarding alcohol and drug use department wide.

Station 2 – “3”



Figure 10 St James Fire District Station 2 - “3” 221 Jefferson Ave

Station 2 Staffing

The department reported the following staffing at Station 2:

Department: St James				<u>Emergency Medical Services</u>			
Station # 2				<u>(EMS) NYSDH Certification</u>			
Total Number of Responders 92				Certified First Responder (CFR) 0			
Rank	Volunteer	Career	Total	Emergency Medical Technician	13		13
Firefighter /EMT	63	10	73	Advanced Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate (AEMT-I)			0
Company Officer	15		15	Advanced Emergency Medical Technician - Critical Care (AEMT-CC)	7	7	14
Chief Officer	4		4	Advanced Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic (AEMT-P)	4	3	7
Active Volunteer			0				
Career Staff			0				
Total	82	10	92				
Sex Male	65	8	73	Percent of Volunteers by age			
Sex Female	16	2	18	18 – 21	6%		
Age Range:				22 - 29	19%		
18 – 21	5	0	5	30 – 39	17%	Age Ranges	
22 - 29	15	6	21	40 – 49	22%	40 to Plus 60	58%
30 – 39	14	3	17	50 - 59	15%	50 to Plus 60	36%
40 – 49	18	1	19	60+	21%	60 +	21%
50 - 59	12	0	12				
60+	17	0	17				
	81	10	91				

Figure 11: Station 2 Staffing & Responder Ages

The age range of Volunteer Emergency Responders at Station 2 is comparable to that of Station 1 indicating an aging base of Volunteers and a small number of younger Volunteers entering service. Of the 81 Volunteers at Station 2, 17, (21%) are over the age of 60. 36%, of the emergency responders are over 50 years old and a total of 58% of the emergency responders are over the age of 40. Only 20 emergency responders at station 2 are under the age of 30.

These numbers reflect a growing serious issue for future Volunteer staffing response to emergency incidents. We will further address this issue in a section examining staffing solutions.

Strategic Recommendation 2: There is an immediate need to Identify, Recruit and Retain more Volunteers especially focusing on bringing younger Volunteers into the agency.

Specific Recommendation 8: There is a need for Fire Company and the Fire Commission to identify and understand the personal life conditions and department

conditions and facilities that would attract a younger generation to the Volunteer fire rescue service

Station 2 Facilities

Apparatus room: # of bays:	7		Facilities provided in this station	Yes	No
	Yes	No			
Apparatus can enter from front and rear doors	X	X	Training room	X	
Vehicle exhaust system:	X		Officers' room:	X	
PPE Gear storage area	X		Kitchen:	X	
PPE Cleaning facilities/equipment	X		Recreation areas:	X	
Designated Equipment cleaning area:	X		Community use room		X
Designated EMS equipment cleaning area:	X		Restrooms male	X	
Logistics supply area Meds and EMS equipment	X		Restrooms female:	X	
Logistics supply area Personnel Protective Equipment supplies	X		Restrooms Common		X
Logistics supply area other emergency supplies	X		Restrooms Public		X
			Shower area Males	X	
			Shower area Females:	X	
			Shower area Joint use area		X
			Bunk Room:		X
			Individual sleeping rooms		X

Figure 12: Station 2 Facilities

Station 2

Station 2 consists of 2 structures separated by a parking lot. The original structure of Station 2 faces Jefferson Ave with access door to the station from the parking lot. The station was originally built with 2 bays opening front and rear. A bay was added to accommodate the aerial ladder. The left side of the structure provides office space for the Fire District office staff, Chief Officers. There is a meeting/recreation room which formerly had a bar which is still in place. I was told that the bar is no longer in use. There is a small ready room for on duty Per Diem EMTs and restrooms.

There are limited staff accommodations in this building: There is No Bunk Room for on duty staffing. The Per Diem staff was observed sitting & waiting in a space off the main hallway that appears to have been a large closet with no window. There is an air compressor for recharging SCBA tanks. There is a supply locker for EMS supplies. I did not see a secured area for EMS drugs & supplies etc. There is no designated cleaning area for EMS equipment or EMS personnel returning to the station with body fluids on their gear or person. I was told that the crews wash equipment at the hospitals when possible or wash it on the apparatus floor. The Fire District office staff has a large common office work space with no privacy. The station boiler appears to be old and not energy efficient. The building recently had serious leaks and flooding due to broken roof drain lines.



Figure 13: Station 2

Station “3”

The structure at the rear has been referred to as “station 3” by members. The apparatus section of this structure is a 4 bay garage with some storage and turnout gear racks. The right side of the structure is an addition with a very well equipped complete physical workout room with 2 restrooms and showers. The use log in the in the exercise room indicates that this facility is well used by emergency responders working to stay in shape. It appears that there is no door connecting the workout area with the apparatus bay section. Those emergency responders working out to have to exit the building to gain entry to the apparatus area or to run across the parking lot to access apparatus in the main building.

There are also 2 fuel pumps in the parking area: Gasoline and Diesel



Figure 14 Station “3”

Specific Recommendation 9: A doorway should be created from the exercise room to the apparatus bay section of the building to provide ready access to that area by emergency responders who are using the exercise equipment.

Apparatus assigned to Station 2

The following apparatus is assigned to Station 2:

Station #	2						
Fire Apparatus Type Engine, Truck, Quint, Squad/Rescue	Unit Number	year	Miles	Owned, Leased, Lease purchase	Status 1 Front line - 2 Reserve - 3 Historic	Manufacturer	Pump Capacity
Engine	4-3-2	2001	9375	Owned	1	Pierce	1500
Engine	4-3-3	1993	33335	Owned	1	Pierce	1500
Ambulance	4-3-61	2012	37412	Owned	1	Chevy/PL	n/a
Ambulance	4-3-62	2009	41741	Owned	1	Ford/PL	n/a
Ladder	4-3-7	1998	19323	Owned	1	Pierce	n/a
Rescue	4-3-9	2008	8646	Owned	1	KME	n/a
First Responder	4-3-80	2008	86702	Owned	1	Ford	n/a
First Responder	4-3-81	2011	34615	Owned	1	Ford	n/a

Figure 15: Apparatus at Station 2

All apparatus is regularly serviced and tested and appears to be in excellent and well maintained condition. Engine 433 is over 25 years old but appears to be in excellent condition having passed annual pump tests and mechanical servicing and with only 33,335 miles on the odometer. Ladder 437 is 20 years old with only 19,323 miles. In the larger question to be determined in the Strategic Planning process regarding how many pieces of apparatus the department should operate with and how many pieces of apparatus it should maintained in reserve status, I see

nothing that would limit the future service life of both of these apparatus as a reserve units for at least the next 5 – 10 or more years.

SCBA					
Total Number of SCBA In Station and on apparatus	30				
Brand of SCBA	SCOTT				
# of Spare Bottles	28				
Air Compressor	Yes				

Figure 16: SCBA Station 2

Equipment carried on all department apparatus

Equipment/Materials Available in Each Vehicle																	
Unit Number	Radio Fixed	# Portable Radios	Pre Plans	Maps	ICS supplies	RIT procedures	MCI Supplies	Water Supply Maps & records	Medical Supplies	Rescue automatic tools	Portable lights	Foam supply	GPS	Computer	Generator	Inventory Record	Maintenance records
4-3-2	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes		No		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-3-3	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes		No		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-3-61	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4-3-62	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4-3-7	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-3-9	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-3-80	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4-3-81	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No		Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
4-3-1	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-3-8	Yes	2		Yes					Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Figure 17 Equipment carried on apparatus

Observations: During the site visit we observed that all equipment carried on each vehicle was well maintained and kept clean and ready for use. The question for the Commission needs to be; how much apparatus does the agency require as both front line response units and as reserve units. We also observed fire apparatus at a number of other fire stations in the greater community that provide and receive automatic and mutual aid in the Fire district. It appears that there is a large inventory of excellent apparatus of many types that may be needed for response to emergencies in the region.

Strategic Recommendation 3: There should be a regional planning committee to review the ages and conditions of all apparatus in the region to determine a replacement schedule that will assure that the regional fleet is sufficient and ready for service and that there is a system to assure ready reserve apparatus.

Conclusion Fire Station Facilities

Do the facilities at Station 1 meet the service needs of today's fire rescue service? The immediate answer is **No**. This station in its current condition no longer meets the needs of today's fire rescue services based upon our observations and the above issues.

Do the facilities at Station 2 (3) meet the service needs of today's fire rescue service? The immediate answer is **No**. This station in its current condition no longer meets the needs of today's fire rescue services based upon our observations and the above issues.

Both primary fire stations have many issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive Strategic Planning initiative. The conditions and locations of both stations and their use both long term and short term should be the determining factors for the Fire Commission as they decide to conduct or not conduct a referendum for the sale of this property at this time.

If the District Commissioners decide to remediate the facilities at Station 2 there will be a need to have other facilities available during that remediation period for conducting the business of the Fire District. Station 1 would be a suitable temporary location for District offices during that period. The property at the Station 1 location may also have the potential of serving the District in other expanded capacities as noted in this report and therefore the property should stay under the direct ownership of the Fire District. The Fire District should also carefully consider all of the potential community wide political actions and results of the sale of this property

Strategic Recommendation 4: The Fire Commission should consider all of the factors in this report carefully and conduct and complete a broad range Strategic Planning initiative before acting to hold a referendum to transfer title of Station 1 to anyone.

Strategic Recommendation 5: The Fire District should not give up title to the Station 1 property until such time as the Fire District has completed an extensive community and member driven Strategic Planning process and closely examined all potential uses and options for the use Station 1 and all other properties.

Calls for Service Demands

The St. James Fire District provided the following information demonstrating their calls for service in 2016, 2017 and year to date (4/12/18).

Calls for service	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u> <u>to 04/12/18</u>
Structure fires	30	25	7
Non Structure fires	98	126	35
Vehicle accidents	39	34	8
EMS	870	964	232
Haz Mat	1	0	0
Public assistance	157	165	40
Other	101	110	42
Total calls for service	1296	1424	364
Total calls for service	1296	1424	364
Average Total of All Calls for service Per day	3.55	3.90	3.57
Average number of EMS calls for service per day	2.38	2.64	2.27
Total EMS Calls	870	964	232
Average number of EMS calls per day	2.38	2.64	2.27
Percent of calls for service	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD to</u> <u>04/12/18</u>
Structure fires	2%	2%	2%
Non Structure fires	8%	9%	10%
Vehicle accidents	3%	2%	2%
EMS	67%	68%	64%
Haz Mat	0%	0%	0%
Public assistance	12%	12%	11%
Other	12%	8%	12%

Figure 18: Calls for service 2017 -2018YTD

The numbers clearly show that response to EMS, Emergency Medical Service, incidents is the dominate service demand of the agency. This is consistent with service demands in other fire rescue agencies that provide EMS services to their communities. Experience in other agencies also shows that the demand for EMS services will continue to grow as the community ages.

When EMS is provided each call requires an extensive amount of time from response to on scene treatment to transport to medical facilities and travel time back to the time required for staff, equipment and vehicle cleanup and restocking of used supplies. When this service is provided primarily by a total Volunteer force the agency and every emergency responder needs to examine how those time demands impact the personal lives and schedules of those Volunteers . Strategic plans must be made to provide these services and avoid breaking the valued Volunteer system.

Strategic Recommendation 6: Examine how EMS service time demands impact the personal lives and schedules of Volunteers and develop plans to staff this service to avoid breaking the valued Volunteer system.

Specific Recommendation 10: If New York State fails to change the laws that prohibit Fire Districts from billing for EMS services the Fire District should immediately work with its attorneys to create a separate EMS agency that does have the authority to bill users for EMS services so that those fees remit to the Fire District to cover the costs of these operations.

Service Demand Response Time Review

The agency provided response times for incidents in 2017 – year to date (April 18, 2018) for review. There were a total of 1828 records. After editing out calls that had data issues we reviewed 1715 call for service. Below are charts demonstrating the average response times from time of alarm to arrival on scene. We have divided the responses into the time ranges of 00:00 to 06:00; 06:00 to 18:00 and 18:00 to 24:00 to show service demands by time of day.

Time Range	count	Total Elapsed time from Alarm to arrival in time range range	Average Time from Alarm to Arrival	
0000 to 0600	198	26:22:28	0:08:00	
0600 - 1800	1050	97:23:53	0:05:34	
1800 - 2400	467	54:14:43	0:06:58	
Total calls reviewed 24 hour average	1715	178:01:04	0:06:14	average time 24 hours

In the first review we observed that the time included response times of less than 1 minute and over 15 minutes. It is our experience that extremes in times, either shorter or longer, tend to skew the results so we did the same analysis after removing calls under 1 minute and those greater than 15 minutes.

Time Range	count	Total Elapsed time from Alarm to arrival in time range range	Average Time from Alarm to Arrival	
0000 to 0600	177	20:48:52	0:07:03	Greater than 1:00 Minute Less than 15:00 Minutes
06:00 - 18:00	960	79:18:49	0:04:57	Greater than 1:00 Minute Less than 15:00 Minutes
18:00 - 24:00	419	44:29:16	0:06:22	Greater than 1:00 Minute Less than 15:00 Minutes
Total calls reviewed 24 hour average	1556	144:36:57	0:05:35	Greater than 1:00 Minute Less than 15:00 Minutes

Figure 19: Response arrival time Percent charts

Specific Recommendation 11: It should be the duty of company officers to review all alarm records at least weekly to assure accuracy in the recording of response time information. An Assistant Chief should review response time data at least monthly to assure that response time goals are being met.

Incident Staffing

Response to Incidents

The agency reported the following average number of responders to calls for service.

Response Staffing	
Average Number of Interior fire fighters responding to calls	12
Average Number of Exterior fire fighters responding to calls	14
Average Number of Support members responding to calls	10

Figure 20: Reported average incident staffing

Observation: It appears that as a matter of practice Volunteer Emergency Responders, other than Chief Officers, no matter what their location at the time of a dispatch, are required to report to their fire station before responding. This policy can create a needless delay of responders directly to the scene of an incident.

Observation: PPE, personal protective equipment/turnout gear for each responder is kept at the fire station the Volunteer belongs to. The only exception to this rule appears to be that chief officers can and do keep their PPE in their vehicles and they can respond directly to the scene of an incident.

Specific Recommendation 12: The Operations planning committee should review where Volunteer responders keep their PPE with a goal to assure that each Volunteer is able to respond directly to the scene of an incident with their PPE. That policy must also assure that PPE is kept and transported contaminate free and that contaminated PPE is not placed back into private vehicles or on apparatus without proper packaging to prevent cross contamination.

Emergency Medical Responses

The number of calls for response to emergency medical incidents is growing rapidly. Many of these calls require that aid be rendered in very short time windows if there is to be any chance to save a life or prevent brain damage. Those times are presented in the Benchmark section of this report.

The types of emergency medical incidents requiring response has also changed. There is a nationwide epidemic of Opioid overdoses that can be fatal without rapid intervention with drugs that counter act the effects of the opioids. In an aging community the number of heart attacks and falls is also ever increasing. Review of the St James incident counts clearly show that EMS calls are the highest demand for service.

Specific Recommendation 13: The Operations planning committee should review EMS response to develop a response strategy that assures prompt response to the scene of each EMS incident by properly trained and equipped EMS responders. That initial response could be in responder's private vehicles that should be identified as EMS responder vehicles with magnetic signs and have NYS approved EMS responder emergency lights. Unneeded fire apparatus should not respond.

Specific Recommendation 14: Each EMS responder should be provided with the drugs and equipment that they have been trained and authorized to use as well as the PPE required to properly perform their duties safely and efficiently.

Specific Recommendation 15: Automatic Defibrillators should be located in many areas around the St. James Fire District including at museums, stores, restaurants and recreation areas. Police officers should carry AED devices in their vehicles and be trained in their use. Provision of automatic Cardio Defibrillator on-site and encouraging members of the local community to train in CPR will improve cardiac survival rates.

On Duty Staffing

Observation: There currently is no formal Volunteer On Duty staffing program in the St. James Fire District.

Observation: There are no or very limited facilities in either station that would encourage Volunteers to spend time at the station beyond the time they spend on training and maintenance issues.

While some of the respondents to the emergency responder survey stated that they did not see a benefit to on duty staffing in the fire stations, experience in many other Volunteer departments clearly demonstrate that the assignment of Volunteers to station duty on specific days and/or nights is extremely beneficial for assuring proper levels of staffing. I strongly believe that every Volunteer fire station today should have an On Duty Staffing policy and the facilities to facilitate that staffing as part of its Volunteer staffing program.

It is extremely important to have proper facilities for regular assigned station duty times that will enable Volunteers to establish their regular personal Volunteering schedules far in advance to meet family and personal life activity schedules. Providing an opportunity to schedule Volunteer time into the lives of the majority of young people and families today is a vital tool in recruitment and retention of Volunteers.

- Regular scheduling of Volunteers staffing fire stations has been extremely successful in many agencies.

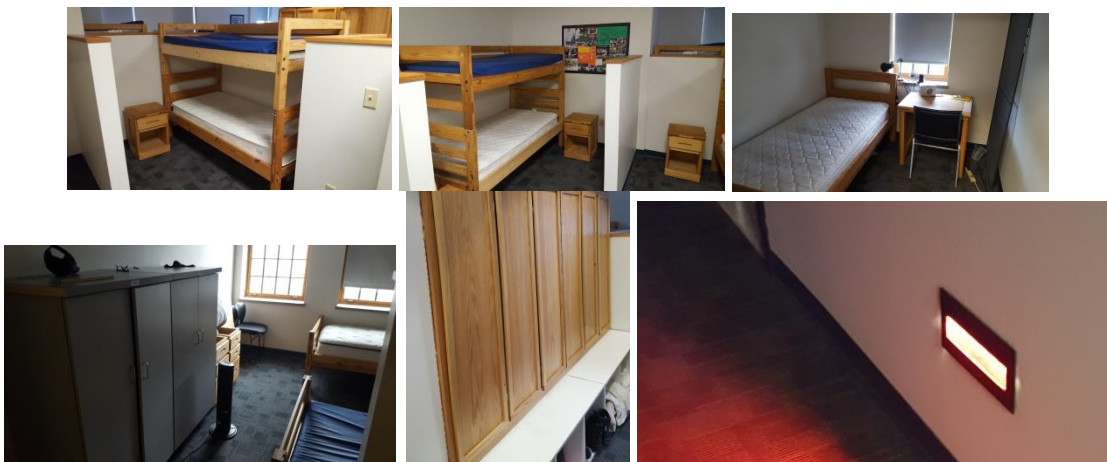


Figure 21: Fayetteville NY fire station bunkroom layouts: Bunk beds, Student Volunteer room with study desk, Open bunk room and lockers, Bunker student lockers, Red night safety lights along walkways. (This station has multiple rooms or spaces of each type.)

The use of college students as resident emergency responders in return for living quarters has also proven very successful for several fire rescue agencies in Syracuse and many other areas where there are colleges. With Stoney Brook University with students attending from all parts of NYS and beyond being located in this community there is certainly an excellent opportunity to develop an active plan to recruit and retain college students to serve as Volunteers as part of the ongoing efforts to assure Volunteer staffing.

Specific Recommendation 16: Establish a program where Volunteers have the opportunity to schedule when they will be on duty and able to serve as emergency responders. The pre-scheduling of duty time and training activities to better fit the needs of modern families will allow more people the opportunity to serve their community within their busy life schedules.

Specific Recommendation 17: Fire stations should each be equipped with facilities that will accommodate on duty staffing in an atmosphere that would provide a welcoming and comfortable experience.

Specific Recommendation 18: Once fire station facilities have been created to accommodate on duty staffing there should be an active recruitment of local college students who are, or can become trained emergency responders to become St. James Fire District emergency responders in return for the District providing living quarters.

The details to the successful Bunk - In program of the Fayetteville NY fire department for students from out of the area attending one of the local colleges are in the Appendix of this report. That department also has regular scheduled bunk in station duty time for the majority of its Volunteer emergency responders to accommodate their life schedules:

Supervision at Incidents & Officer Qualifications

It is vital to assure that every person who may be in charge of any emergency incident is properly trained to recognized standards. While I do believe that the officers that I met are most likely qualified for the positions they hold, a review of the St. James Fire Department: Standard Operating Guidelines, Chain of Command Structure Issued March 23, 2015 and revised January 17, 2018 and the Saint James Fire Department, Inc. Constitution and By-Laws do not identify that the requirements for these positions is in accordance with the requirements as defined by New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, NYSOFPC or other current standards for emergency responders and supervisors.

ARTICLE II³

Section 1. *The Line Officers of the Department shall consist of the Chief, First Assistant Chief, Second Assistant Chief, Third Assistant Chief, and a Captain and two Lieutenants of the Line Companies of the Department.*

Section 3c. *In order for a member to be nominated to the position of Chief of the Department, he must have served at least one term as an Assistant Chief, and Assistant Chief as a Captain, a Captain as a Lieutenant. In addition, any member nominated to any of the above Line Officers' position must be 21 years of age, must have three years active service as a Firefighter, must hold a Certificate of Completion from a recognized Vocational Fire School, and complete the Officers Training Course. This By-Law shall take effect May 1, 1980.*

ARTICLE VI Section 1. *Duties of the Chief: It shall be the duty of the Chief to have absolute control and supervision of the Department at fires, drills and parades, and to perform all duties required of an Executive Officer.*

Section 3. *Duties of the First, Second and Third Assistant Chiefs: It shall be the duty of the Assistant Chiefs to assist the Chief, and to perform the duties of the Chief in the absence of the Chief.*

Section 4. *Duties of the Captains and Lieutenants: It shall be the duties of the Captains and Lieutenants to enforce the orders of the Chief and Assistant Chiefs. They shall be responsible for the condition of their respective apparatus, and for discipline and drill of their respective companies. They shall see that the apparatus is in readiness at all times.*

Article VII Section 9. *Within two (2) years after election to membership, every member shall either complete Suffolk County Fire School course or equivalent; or obtain certification as an Emergency Medical technician or equivalent. Failure to do so may result in the member being dismissed from the Department.(revised 10/09)*

The need to assure the qualifications of all Volunteers for all of the duties that they may perform, especially those who are or become Officers in the fire rescue services is to assure safety at emergency incidents and at training. The following list shows the current requirements for supervisors at emergency incidents per the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control and other agencies that define the qualifications needed to perform in a supervisory role at emergency incidents:

³ Operating Guidelines, Chain of Command Structure Issued March 23, 2015 and revised January 17, 2018: Saint James Fire Department, Inc.

- NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control issued FEMA bulletin “NIMS Alert/5 Most Asked Questions”⁴ NA: 004-06:
 - This bulletin defined the NIMS ICS-300 and ICS-400 Training Requirements for emergency supervisors.⁵
- The completion of ICS-300 and ICS-400 training⁶ is a National Incident Management System (NIMS) implementation activity for middle management and command and general staff.
- All federal, state, local, tribal, private sector and non-governmental personnel with a direct role in emergency management and response must be NIMS and ICS trained.
- This includes all emergency services related disciplines such as EMS, hospitals, public health, fire service, law enforcement, public works/utilities, skilled support personnel, and other emergency management response, support and Volunteer personnel.
- It is important to also note that; “the NIMS Integration Center strongly recommends that all elected officials who will be interacting with multiple jurisdictions and agencies during an emergency incident at the minimum, complete IS-700: NIMS.”

NFPA codes, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, New York State and Federal laws have all established minimum standards that every person in command of a company or an incident should meet. It is vitally important for personnel and public safety that all officers meet those minimum qualifications and that training be made available to all who aspire to become or remain line officers in fire rescue services.

Strategic Recommendation 7: It must be a priority to assure that every person who will serve in a command and supervisory role is trained to the appropriate Incident Command levels before they assume those roles.

Strategic Recommendation 8: Policies must be instituted that assure that ICS is utilized in practice at EVERY incident from the arrival of the first unit until the incident has been fully mitigated.

Specific Recommendation 19: The Contract for service between the St. James Fire District and the St. James Fire Department, and others, should require that the Fire Department provide annual documentation demonstrating that each emergency responder meets the current standards of training required for the position they fill.

⁴ https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/5_common_faqs.pdf

⁵ https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/ics_300_fs.pdf

⁶ <https://training.fema.gov/emcourses/crsdetail.aspx?cid=e400&ctype=r>

Mutual & Automatic Aid

Mutual and Automatic aid from and to neighboring fire rescue agencies is a vital part of fire rescue services in every community. The seamless operation of mutual and automatic aid is vital to assuring that every response has adequate apparatus and staffing to safely mitigate the event. Based upon the survey results from both the Community and the Emergency Responders it appears that there has not been sufficient effort made to educate everyone in the greater community about the values of mutual and automatic aid to all emergency response.

The Mutual aid system does not apply only for response to structure fires as many people would assume. Mutual and Automatic Aid is a vital part of all fire rescue services in the St James Fire District and the entire region.

The St. James Fire District has a close working relationship with its neighboring agencies. The following show those activities and the demands on emergency responders:

Number of Times St. James Received or requested Automatic or Mutual Aid from other fire rescue agencies	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u>
Nesconset	23	19	3
Smithtown	4	3	0
Nissequogue	3	3	1
Stony Brook	4	3	0
Kings Park	1	0	0
Centereach	3	2	0
Ronoknoma	1	0	0
Total Mutual/Automatic Aid from other Fire departments	39	30	4
Total Mutual/Automatic Aid from other Fire departments	39	30	4
Number of Times St. James Responded Automatic or Mutual Aid To other districts.	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018 YTD</u>
Centereach	0	0	1
Hauppauge	0	1	0
Kings Park	4	6	1
Lakeland	1	0	0
Nesconset	0	0	1
Port Jefferson	1	0	0
Ronkonkoma	0	2	1
Smithtown	16	33	6
Stony Brook	5	4	3
Nissequogue	15	15	0
Total Mutual/Automatic Aid To other Fire departments	42	61	13

Figure 22 Mutual Aid received and given

Calls for service	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u> <u>YTD to</u> <u>04/12/18</u>	<u>Total</u>
Structure fires	30	25	7	62
Total Mutual/Automatic Aid from other Fire departments	39	30	4	73

Figure 23: Percent of Mutual Aid received for reported structure fires

The need for Mutual and Automatic aid companies to train to operate together safely is vital. The agency reported the following:

Has the District held mutual aid drills with other fire departments based upon those agencies fire preplans? Enter Name of District	Yes	<u>No</u>	Year of last drill
Nesconset	Yes		2017
Ronkonkoma	Yes		2017
Nissequogue	Yes		2017

Figure 24: Reported Training with Mutual Aid Companies

Specific Recommendation 20: There needs to be consistent and ongoing cross training with all mutual aid agencies that St. James Fire District operates with.

Specific Recommendation 21: There should be comprehensive information provided to the Community and All members of the St. James Fire Department about the values of the greater communitywide use of Mutual and Automatic aid.

Mutual Aid Fire station travel Distances

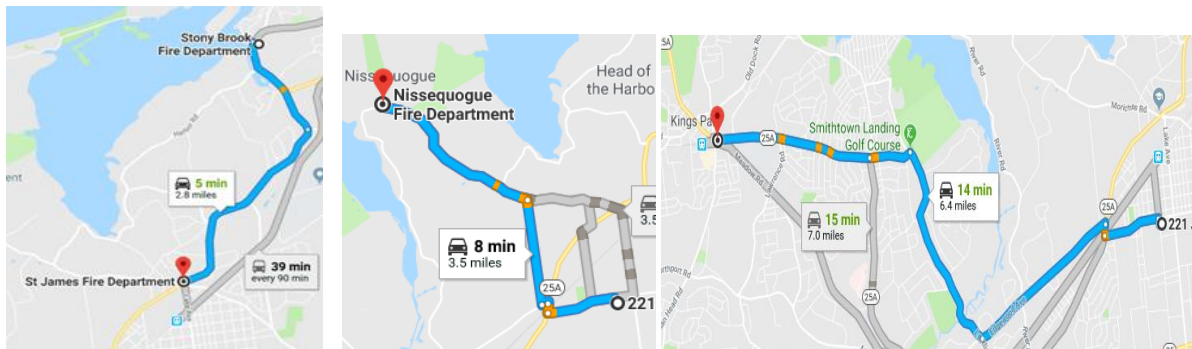
The Following maps show the travel distances for fire Companies that respond to and with St. James on Mutual and Automatic Aid call for service. This consultant chose as a common reference point for these distances the St. James Fire District Station 2 at 221 Jefferson Ave. This location was chosen as the reference point due to the proposal to construct a new station at this address. However for strategic fire station planning purposes we strongly recommend examining several potential fire station sites.



Station 1 to station 2

Nesconset

Smithtown



Stoney Brook

Nissequogue

Kings Park

Figure 25: Travel distances from Mutual aid fire stations

Head of the Harbor Concerns About Travel Distances & Response Times from Fire Stations

There have been concerns expressed by some residents of the Head of the Harbor community that the closing of the 1922 historic St James Fire Station 1 will have a negative impact on response to their community. It is our opinion that the response changes would be negligible and that if the Fire District adopts the proposed changes in response staffing arrival times, districtwide, would actually improve.

It is my professional opinion after conducting the site visit that response to each area of the community meets and will continue to meet nationally recognized Standards of Response guidelines based upon population densities. I make that determination based also on the fact that the St. James Fire District and the region has a vigorous automatic and mutual aid system providing responses to all incidents from multiple fire stations:

Today’s modern standards of response guidelines and benchmarks, as defined by the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Commission on Fire Accreditation International, encourage multiple levels of service within the following categories combined with appropriate deployment of equipment and personnel. As agencies analyze their response times, those times should include call processing, turnout time and travel time.

Planning zone categories

URBAN: as defined by the U. S. Census Bureau, an area with at least 1,000 people per square mile.

	<u>1ST Unit</u>	<u>2nd Unit</u>	<u>Balance of Assignment</u>	<u>Performance</u>
Benchmark	4 min.	8 min.	8 min.	90%

SUBURBAN: as defined by the U. S. Census Bureau, an area with between 500 and 1,000 people per square mile.

	<u>1ST Unit</u>	<u>2nd Unit</u>	<u>Balance of Assignment</u>	<u>Performance</u>
Benchmark	5 min.	8 min.	8 min.	90%

RURAL: as defined by the U. S. Census Bureau, an area with fewer than 500 people per square mile.

	<u>1ST Unit</u>	<u>2nd Unit</u>	<u>Balance of Assignment</u>	<u>Performance</u>
Benchmark	10 min.	14 min.	14 min.	90%

The criteria above show the range of performance within each population category from the target benchmark. These performance indicators are based upon emergency, priority 1 responses.

Figure 26: Response Time Benchmarks Center for Public Safety Excellence, CPSE, Commission of Fire Accreditation International, CFAI

The following maps show the comparison in travel distances between locations in the community from each of the current fire stations.

- These maps demonstrate that neither fire station is more than 5 miles from various locations in the Village.
 - Five miles travel distance is the maximum distance that ISO recognizes for assigning credit for a fire station when determining community fire protection classifications for insurance purposes.

- Each map also shows travel times for each route. Those times are based upon normal residential travel by private vehicles and are not reflective of anticipated travel times for emergency vehicles traveling with lights and sirens.
- These maps also do not show travel distances from other area fire stations which respond on as automatic and mutual aid to fires in the district.

Map Addresses for 2 fire stations in St. James District

- St James Fire District 221 Jefferson Ave, St James, NY 11780
- St James Fire Department 533 NY-25A, St James, NY 11780

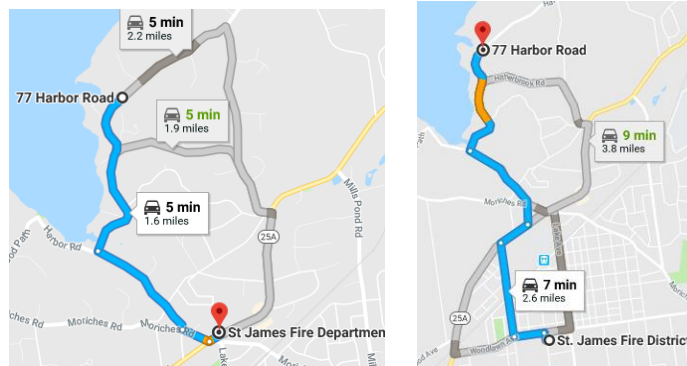


Figure 27: Station 1 & Station 2 Travel time and distance to 77 Harbor Rd = + 1 Mile;

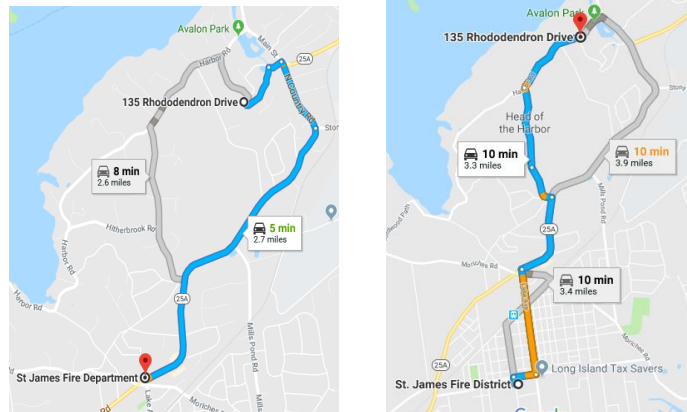


Figure 28: Station 1 & Station 2 Travel time and distance to 135 Rhododendron Dr.: = + .7 Miles;

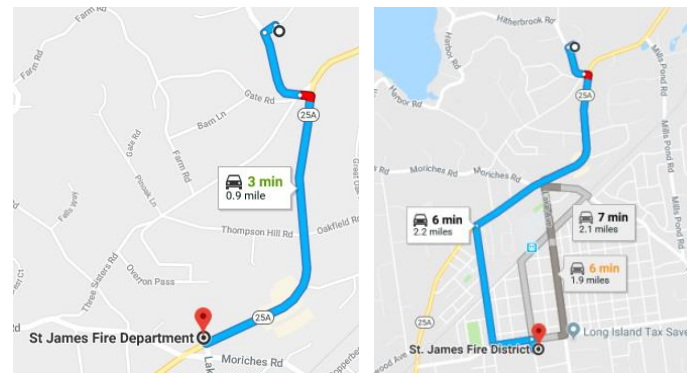


Figure 29: Station 1 & Station 2 Travel time and distance to 4-22 Hitherbrook Road: = + 1 Mile

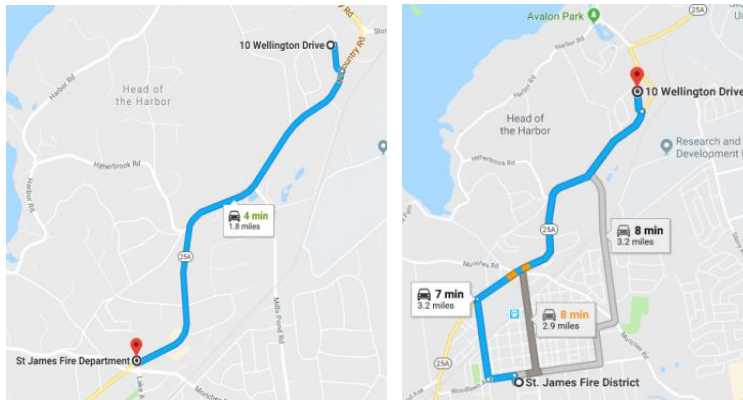


Figure 30: Station 1 & Station 2 travel time & distance to 10 Wellington Dr. = + 1.1 Mile:

Area Mutual Aid Fire Stations

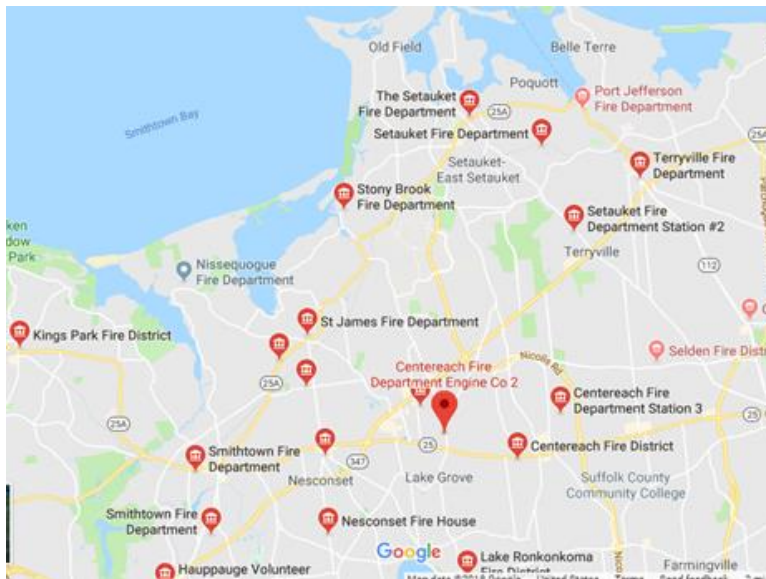


Figure 31: Mutual Aid Fire Stations in area of St James Fire District

Mutual aid and Automatic is a vital part of fire rescue response in every community. The St James Fire District is fortunate to be in an area where there are many close by fire companies that are part of an excellent wide area automatic and mutual aid system.

Fire Police

Incident safety in terms of traffic and crowd control has been identified as being very important for scene safety. Fire departments have developed cadres of fire police officers to serve in that function. The value of the fire police cadre and their importance to the public safety not only at fire incidents but also at other major events where police officers would be tied up with other concerns has been repeatedly demonstrated.

In general we found that most fire police members are in the upper age ranges. This has the effect of keeping experienced people involved in Volunteer service and assures all of the benefits and experience that their maturity brings to Volunteerism.

Specific Recommendation 22: The fire police program should be expanded in the number of fire police, their training and their duties.

Replacement Fire Station(s)

The Fire District held a recent bond referendum to replace Station 2. The referendum was defeated. Public comments in the press and in our community survey indicated that residents felt that the size of the replacement structure did not reflect the community of the neighborhood among many other concerns including costs and their impact on taxes.



Figure 32: Proposed Station Replacement

Observations: My review of the proposed structure and the proposed floor plans for the proposed replacement fire station has led me to concur with the feeling expressed in the community regarding the size of this structure for this residential neighborhood location.

The concept structure does not appear to match the historic character of the St. James and Head of the Harbor Community. In my opinion this lack of conforming community character stands out strongly as a reason for the public to not support the bond initiative. The structural appearance of community fire stations should be conforming to the neighborhood that the structure is to be built on. Be that the site of Station 2 or any other community location.

Locally there is an excellent example of how a fire station was designed to fit the character of a community in neighboring Stoney Brook where their fire station is built into a quaint shopping area and does not appear at all to be a fire station. If there is the need for more fire station space in St. James those areas where Stoney Brook fire station now has stores and businesses that space could certainly be fire station facilities in that same type of façade.

- This is not to suggest that the St. James station should look exactly like the station in Stoney Brook but to rather to demonstrate that the structure in an historic community needs to match the neighboring properties.



Figure 33: Stoney brook Fire Station

Strategic Recommendation 9: No matter what location is selected for any fire station in any community it is important to involve the greater community in what the appearance of the structure will be. Some agencies have even held public contests for concept drawings of what the members of the community think the appearance of what their new station should look like to involve the greater community.

Concept Fire Station Proposed Floor Plans

Observations: I have also reviewed the conceptual floor plans for the proposed 2017 structure and for a project that was proposed in 2013. I have serious concerns about both sets of floor plans relative to the needs of the fire rescue services in 2018 and into the future.

Both sets of plans were drawn by an AIA architect with extensive experience in fire station design. Generally these types of plans are based upon meetings between the architect and his or her clients. Plans generally reflect what the client requested to be included and are often not inclusive of the final needs for operational efficiency, effectiveness and safety. Many times it is during construction projects for fire stations that there is the realization of the items and issues that have not been included in the concept proposal. When missing or incomplete issues are addressed during construction the addition of those items and features result in costly and time consuming change orders. The need to avoid changes that impact total costs and or operations can be mostly avoided by careful planning and examination of operational functions and needs.

In my professional opinion, based upon my experience in planning a number of fire rescue stations and facilities, there are several serious issues that do not appear on either of these concept plans. The following should be addressed and included as a matter of health safety and operational effectiveness as the St. James Fire District plans for the future and current operations.

Specifically on the 2017 conceptual plans I do not find:

- A clear separation between the apparatus area and the staff ready room
- Cleaning room for medical equipment
- Cleaning room or equipment for turnout gear
- Room for air compressor and SCBA maintenance
- A separate secure storage room or space for drugs (the EMS supply room seems to be combined space for ems supplies and drugs)
- There is no designated sleeping quarters for on duty staff.
- The placing of Murphy beds in rooms that have been designated for other functions will create future problems for on duty staff and should be avoided.
- The gear storage space blocks use of the rear doors to 2 of the apparatus bays and is not separated from the apparatus area and the contaminates that are common in apparatus spaces.
- There is no fitness room
- The restroom and shower facilities serve both emergency responders cleaning up after calls and the public.

Specific Recommendation 23: I recommend that the Fire Commission appoint a formal fire station planning committee with members from the fire department and members of the community and that that committee be charged with reviewing recognized reference sources for modern fire station construction and remodeling.

When determining what facilities should be inside a fire station there are several excellent reference sources for fire station design. These references are in the appendix of this report. Each of those references show recognized facilities and recognized codes and standards that should be included in fire rescue stations today:

When considering building a new fire station or remodeling an older station in addition to State and local building codes there are many relevant codes and standards that should be examined and referenced in the design process. Some of these codes are in the Appendix of this report

Survey Findings

Observations: The survey results from the community and the emergency responders indicated that there are people in the community and in the fire rescue services who feel that they are not fully informed about what is happening in their Fire District. This feeling was confirmed during my site visit to the District office and in conversations with emergency responders. I was told that District staff spends valuable time and effort replying to FOIL, Freedom of Information Law, requests for information about what is happening in the Fire District. I have also observed that minutes' of Commission meetings have not been posted regularly to the Fire District website. The most recent posting of Commission meeting minutes was for the 2/12/18 meeting and the previous posting was for the Commission meeting of 4/10/17. The full minutes of every meeting including the identification of each Commissioner's vote on each issue are by NYS law a matter of public record and should be readily available to the public.

Specific Recommendation 24: The minutes' of every Fire Commission meeting and all other matters that are Public Record under FOIL should be promptly posted on the Fire District website.

Specific Recommendation 25: All meeting minutes must properly identify which Commissioners voted for or against each vote taken.

Survey Results Emergency Responders:

Observation: While not all emergency responders participated in the survey that was made available to them via several email invitations I believe that a sufficient number of Volunteer Emergency Responders did do so to allow us to project an accurate view of the opinions of membership and staff.

The feedback from those who did respond indicated that:

- There are at least 10 Volunteers who are employees of other governments.
- Five of these reported being able to respond to St. James while working
- As shown in the information reported by the agency the majority of Volunteers respond from Station 2
- The duties being performed, Ages ranges and Length of service are consistent with the information reported by the agency.
- Over 80% of the Volunteers travel outside of the district for work or school with over 30% traveling over 20 miles outside the district.
- Volunteer Availability or Non-availability by Time of day indicates that, as is common in most Volunteer departments, over 50% of all Volunteers are generally NOT available from 06:00 to 18:00 hours Monday – Friday.
 - 18% of Volunteers reported that they are trick workers with schedules that change regularly which may have a positive impact on weekday staffing.
- The age ranges and length of service reported in the survey and by the agency are consistent and indicate an aging Volunteer base.
- The survey indicates that 40% of Volunteers donate over 300 hours a year to the fire rescue service and that almost 50% of those Volunteers have between 50 & 100 hours of training per year and 25% have between 100 to 200 hours in training each year.

- Volunteers are trained and qualified Interior and Exterior Firefighters, Apparatus Operators, EMTs, Haz Mat Techs, Fire Police, Incident Management, and Incident support. In addition there are also Volunteer Emergency Responders who are trained and qualified to perform as: Diver, Active shooter responder, Safety officer, WMD Operations, Water Rescue ops, Safety officer, Technical rescue instructor.
- Over 70% are certified to use SCBA
- Less than 10% of the Volunteers reported that they regularly stay on Station Duty.
 - Of those that do approximately 45% are in the station from 18:00 to 24:00
- 30% of the reporting Volunteers believe that the Fire District should establish a policy requiring a certain number of Volunteers to be on station duty at all times.

Policies Recommended By Emergency Responders:

Observation: review of the responses from Emergency Responders and the Community across the board place the need for the Fire District & the Fire Department to establish a Social Media Policy as the highest priority.

- For emergency responders the priority of establishing a Social media policy was followed closely by the need for a policy on Alcohol use.

Other policies called for includes;

- Recruitment and retention
- Internal investigation committee that is impartial to all parties
- Alcohol use
- Workplace violence
- Probationary EMT riding requirements
- EVOC and general driving
- Safety and efficiency in all Fire Dept operations
- Automatic Mutual Aid
- Leave of absence policy,
- Work and Medical Leave
- Disciplinary Policy
- Chiefs orders ... should amended and /or changed as necessary

Specific Recommendation 26: It is vitally important that many of the responses and issues raised by emergency responders regarding personnel issues be primarily dealt with by the leadership of the Fire Department and not the Fire Commission. It is important that the Fire Commission bring these issues to the Fire Department leadership to assure that the Fire Department leadership and their Fire Department members address issues that affect the ability of the Fire Department to meet standards and that they assure a positive relationship between the Department and the Commission to the greater community.

Community Survey

The Community survey was taken by over 270 individuals.

In our review of the responses we first examined ISP numbers of all survey respondents and compared them to the ISP numbers of the responses submitted by emergency responders. Understanding that family members would be taking the community survey we examined the information provided in those surveys with the same ISPs to see if the exact same comments were being made to assure that the input results would not be skewed by anyone with a personal agenda.

The depth of information provided by members of the community showed that the majority of people in the community are highly supportive of the mission of their fire rescue services and the people who serve in fire rescue services in the community. There are some people who have strong views regarding preserving Station 1 for its historic value to the community and others who are concerned about response times to their homes. There are survey responses that indicate that much of the community feels that they are not adequately informed about the plans of the Fire District and there are concerns from people in the Fire District who question the inequality of tax impacts between residents of the Fire District and those in the Village of Head of the Harbor.

Combined Survey Reviews

The goal of each of the surveys was to gather information that will allow the District and the Department to address issues impacting both the community and those who serve. In our editing process we removed the names of individuals noted in the surveys. We also edited some language to provide a clearer view of the input provided and to avoid reporting verbiage that would tend to identify the survey respondents individually from their previous public comments. Our intent is to provide The Fire District, The Fire Company and The Community a common base for entering discussions to address the concerns expressed in an atmosphere that is nonjudgmental and that will result in positive results that will heal past hard feelings between any individuals.

We have created 2 Excel workbooks with the responses from each survey. In each workbook the survey results have been categorized as issues to be addressed by specific planning teams formed by the Strategic Planning Committee to address the issues reported. It is our professional opinion that the Leadership of the Fire Department working with their members should be able to address and resolve 80% or more of the personnel issues raised in the surveys. Most of those issues have been identified in the workbooks as “Leadership”.

In the Excel workbook for Emergency Responder Survey comments we have edited many of the comments as stated by emergency responders to categories of concerns and views because the members and the leaders already know much of what has been reported by their members and it is more important to address the issues than to create a condition where personal feelings supersede efforts to address the issues.

In the Excel workbook for Community Survey comments we have left many of the comments as stated by community members to enable members of the Fire Commission and leaders to see and understand the feelings expressed by members of the community they serve.

These workbooks plus a workbook with the Strategic and Specific recommendations in this report will be submitted to the Fire Commission to use as tools in tracking the Strategic Planning process.

Specific Recommendation 27: The Fire Commission should promptly review the survey findings reported in both workbooks and establish work committees and a Community driven Strategic Planning Committee with various sub committees to address the findings.

Specific Recommendation 28: The Fire District should immediately provide the Emergency Responder Survey results workbook to the Fire Department leadership for their prompt follow-up efforts to address the findings that impact members of their Fire Department.

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is that long range planning that establishes broad goals for the future operations within an agency. Strategic Planning generally has a direct impact on future budgets of governments. In past practices it was common for many government agencies to develop “internal” strategic plans that were not shared with the community being served before budgets were requested. In modern effective and efficient governments, strategic plans are presented to the community for review and input. It is not uncommon in government for strategic plans to be regularly reviewed and modified to reflect changes in the community and changes in funding sources.

Observation: While it appears that the leaders of the Fire District have a clear view of what they each would like to see in the future, there is an apparent lack of a formal up to date St. James Fire District formal Strategic Plan being in place. Comments in the Community survey indicate that residents feel left out of the loop regarding the direction of their fire rescue service. Our in-depth review of current service delivery and the fire rescue management structure identified many factors that must be addressed to assure every taxpayer and every member of the fire rescue community that the operation of their fire rescue services will be governed and operated Effectively Efficiently and Safely. Each of the Strategic and Specific Recommendations in this report is crafted to provide the direction that will successfully attain that goal for the greater community. The Strategic and Specific Recommendations in this report are the building blocks for the formation of governance and operational systems for fire rescue services that will institute the planning and operational changes that will control capital equipment costs, staffing costs and every aspect of fire rescue service delivery.

Strategic Recommendation 10: The St. James Fire District should establish a fire rescue Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning process should involve all levels of the fire rescue service and members of the community. Strategic Planning should be an ongoing community process.

Strategic Recommendation 11: The St. James Fire District Commission should act promptly to address the issues regarding facilities in this report and create a broad based Fire Rescue Strategic Planning Committee with supporting specific duties sub committees to address the findings and recommendations in this report.

Strategic Recommendation 12: The Commissioners of the St. James Fire District should invite the Elected Officials of the Town of Smithtown and Village of Head of the Harbor and other Villages and Fire Districts and Members of the greater community to participate in the fire rescue services Strategic Planning Committee and process.

Specific Recommendation 29: The Strategic Planning Committee shall be comprised of nine (9) members: Two (2) experienced and active emergency responder members of the fire rescue services elected by vote of all active emergency responders (1 Officer & 1 experienced Company officer or Firefighter); Two (2) members of the St. James Fire Commission, One (1) Elected Official of the Town of Smithtown, One (1) elected official Village of Head of the Harbor, and Three (3) citizens who have experience in Strategic Planning and/or a strong desire to serve the community by assuring efficient, effective and safe delivery of fire rescue services. The Citizen and Elected members of the committee should have no personal or family ties to the fire rescue services.

Specific Recommendation 30: Fire Department representatives to the Strategic Planning Committee should assure that Fire Department Policies and Practices are consistent with the Strategic Plans of the Fire district.

Specific Recommendation 31: No Elected Representative to the Strategic Planning Committee should also be an active emergency responder. The citizen members should be selected from leaders of the business community and general public.

Strategic Recommendation 13: A PRIMARY goal of all planning efforts must be to address safety for all emergency responders as well as safety of the public.

Specific Recommendation 32: The primary functions of the Strategic Planning Committee shall be to establish a structure that will assure efficiency, effectiveness and safety in the fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District and to address the issues in this report.

Specific Recommendation 33: The Strategic Planning Committee should appoint specific Sub Committees to address operational issues. Those operational sub committees should include emergency responders with experience in each area as well as subject matter experts from the greater community.

Specific Recommendation 34: The total membership of the St. James Fire Department must be encouraged to be involved in the review, planning and development of the operating guidelines for fire rescue services.

Specific Recommendation 35: Current fire rescue members at all ranks should be involved in the review and development of: Training standards and programs; Standard operating procedures; Response standards, including response time, and staffing; Rank structure; Member benefits, such as retirement programs, Service award programs; and Personnel policies.

2% Foreign Insurance funds

“The Foreign fire tax program under sections 9104 and 9105 of the NYS Insurance Department mandates that any foreign or alien insurance company that writes fire insurance in New York State must contribute 2% of the fire premiums written on property located in NYS to be distributed to the fire departments and fire districts statewide. Excess line brokers licensed to write business in NYS under section 2118 of insurance law, must contribute 3% of fire premiums written on property located in NYS.”⁷

“The general rule for distribution of fire tax funds for a multi-company fire department is: the foreign fire tax monies distributed should be allocated between and among the fire companies proportional to the number of active members in each fire company. If a department is comprised of both paid and Volunteer members, each group would be entitled to fire tax proceeds and monies should be distributed on a pro rata basis...

Except as otherwise provided by a special act, fire tax proceeds may be used for any purpose which the members of the fire department or company determine to be for the use and benefit of the department or company as a whole

Some examples of use of proceeds are: department social functions - such as installation dinners, picnics, banquets, holiday parties; appliances, furniture, televisions for the firehouse; dress & parade uniforms, hats, boots, jackets, t-shirts, turn out gear, and equipment for members of the department; offset of costs from life or disability insurance (must be group policies); and office equipment such as computers and fax machines. If the funds are designated to be received by an exempt or benevolent association created by a special act of the New York State Legislature, the use of the monies is limited to those purposes set forth in the special act.

The Office of the State Comptroller recommends that foreign fire tax funds be accounted for separately; a separate checking or savings account should be set up for the administration of foreign fire tax funds. Cash receipts and cash disbursements should be recorded, detailing the receipt of money and any expenditure of foreign fire tax funds.”⁸

Observation: The St. James Fire Department receives these funds from NYS. The distributed funds are managed by the Fire Department and spent according to NYS laws for the benefit of the agency’s members. The Department is required to submit audit reports to the NYS Comptroller’s office each year.

Strategic Recommendation 14: The Strategic Planning Committee should examine all revenue sources and funding mechanisms, including the 2% foreign insurance funds, to maximize the benefits of each funding source for fire rescue services.

Strategic Recommendation 15: There is a need to develop plans so that the State 2% foreign insurance funds can be used even more effectively as part of a community wide Volunteer recruitment and retention program.

⁷ http://www.ins.state.ny.us/faqs/faqs_ft_ffft.htm

⁸ *ibid*

Finances Taxes and Budget Funding:

Historically taxes have provided the major part of revenue stream for support of fire rescue services. Historically fire departments provided many services to the public with no direct charges to the users of those services. The scope and the cost of those services have grown over the years while funding for them has remained community tax based rather than user directed. Laws in NYS need to be changed to allow fire rescue emergency medical services to charge for services. Currently, around the nation fire rescue services are actively investigating charging for response to traffic accidents and water leaks in buildings. Some are investigating charging users for other incidents that are not direct fire emergencies. Some governments have initiated charges for fire safety inspections in buildings.

Taxes In NYS

Property owners in New York State are among the highest taxed in the nation. The State of New York is encouraging every layer of government to closely examine the services they provide and the costs of those services to help reduce the negative impacts that property taxes have on the economy of the state as a whole. Most citizens have no understanding of how their taxes are calculated or what they provide. To help readers understand the rules for property taxes in NYS we refer them to the NYS publication; *Understanding the Equalization Rate A Guide For Property Owners NYS: Department of taxation and finance.*

That report shows that NYS has 1,200 separate governing units that assess property and more than 4,000 taxing jurisdictions. (There are more taxing entities in NYS than in the other 49 states combined) That report states that there is no fixed percentage at which property must be assessed; that not all municipalities assess property at the same percentage of market value. Taxing jurisdictions, such as most school districts, do not share the same taxing boundaries as the cities. In the St. James Fire District the Town of Smithtown is responsible for assessing properties.

- The residents in the Village of Head of the Harbor do not pay for fire rescue services as a tax assessment based on property value. The Village pays the St. James Fire District a negotiated fee for these services and that fee is incorporated into the total Village tax.

NYS is working to address these areas of inefficiency. However the reality remains that by whatever formula is used for setting taxes, the citizens in NYS are paying some of the highest taxes in the nation, and every effort must be taken at every level of government to contain and or reduce those taxes while still assuring the public the services that they expect and demand. Long Island as a whole has some of the highest tax rates in NYS. New York State has been urging the consolidation of services and local governments as a way to increase efficiency effectiveness in government. The State also has several grant programs to assist local governments in planning efforts for such consolidations.

The Local Government Efficiency (LGe) Grant Program provides technical assistance and competitive grants to local governments for the development of projects that will achieve savings and improve municipal efficiency through shared services, cooperative agreements, mergers, consolidations and dissolutions. With the creation of the LGe program, New York State is committed to working with local governments to control costs while maintaining the quality service delivery provided by New York's local governments.

*The Department of State continues to be well positioned to coordinate the joint provision of state services, promote state and local cost efficiencies.*⁹

*The current Grant application deadline for the 2018 -2019 Local Government Efficiency Grant Program is 7/27/18.*¹⁰

Locally elected officials and taxpayers must, and are, seeking ways to reduce local taxes and yet retain services. On May 4, 2017 Suffolk County Village Officials Association spoke out against NYS Governor Cuomo's shared services initiative. Head of the Harbor Mayor Douglas Dahlgard stated:

"The Governor doesn't seem to be aware of how local municipalities work together to reduce operating costs. ...that local government leadership is directly connected and accountable to its residents." Our NYS elected officials, ... would have found that over 90% of Suffolk County villages have shared service agreements in place with all levels of government (e.g., other villages, towns, county, fire districts, ambulance services, school districts, etc.). Suffolk County villages have been incubators of governmental innovation and inter-municipal cooperation, all to the benefit of the taxpayer."

Strategic Recommendation 16: The Fire District should apply for a Local Government Efficiency Grant this year, before the deadlines. The goal of this Grant should be to fund Strategic Planning efforts to benefit all taxpayers. This Strategic Planning initiative should be held with the leaders of the Village of Head of the Harbor and other Villages and Fire Districts to expand current *"shared service agreements in place with all levels of government (e.g., other villages, towns, county, fire districts, ambulance services... etc.)... governmental innovation and inter-municipal cooperation, all to the benefit of the taxpayer..."*

⁹ <https://www.dos.ny.gov/lge/grant.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/index.html>

Fire Districts Budgets

To better understand local fire protection costs we reviewed fire protection budgets of Fire Districts in the Town of Smithtown using information on the Town website. In that review we found that the St. James Fire District has the lowest budget of all the Fire Districts in the Township.

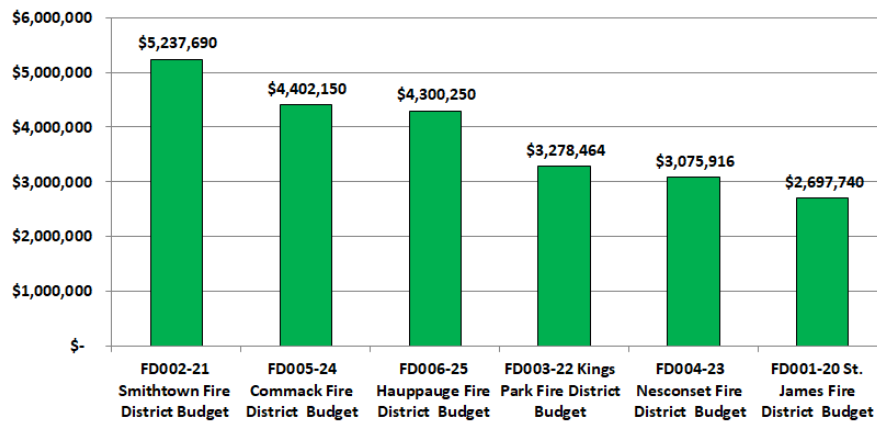


Figure 34: Fire District Budgets compared to St. James Fire District

Because of the St. James Fire District has a lack of large business or other large commercial property occupancies the costs for operations of the Fire District result in property taxes that are in the higher range of taxes charged in the area. The total cost to residents of the St James Fire District for fire protection is lowered by the income derived from the District contract with the Village of Head of the Harbor which expires in December 2018. The funding from this contract provides \$319,325 to the Fire District. However, the Percent of the Head of the Harbor contract income to total Fire District Budget provides only 12% of the total budget.

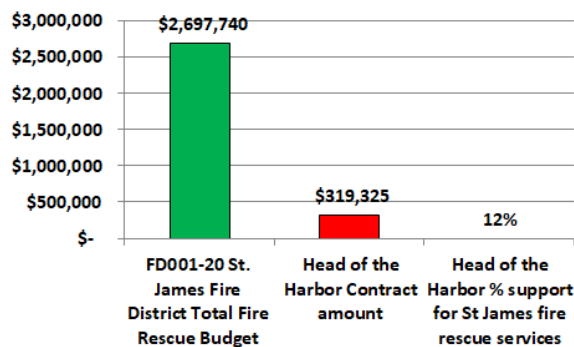


Figure 35: % of Fire District Budget provided by Head of the Harbor Contract

As noted by many respondents to the Community survey the Property owners in the Village of Head of the Harbor do not pay anywhere near the same rate for fire rescue services as do District taxpayers due to the current contract Fire District with the Village.

Strategic Recommendation 17: The Fire District and the Village of Head of the Harbor should enter negotiations to merge Village Fire Protection services into the St. James Fire District to equalize tax impact to taxpayers in the total merged area. Such a merger would also reduce the Village budget by over \$319,000 which would have a positive impact on the Village's efforts to contain costs under the State tax cap limits.

Population Trends & Area Real Estate Trends

School District Enrollment 2007 – 2018

The aging of a community can generally be estimated by examining the local school populations. A young community generally has a higher number of students in the lower grades and an aging community generally has more students in the high school grades. General decreases of school populations in all levels over a period of years are a clear sign of an aging community with fewer young families.

To review school populations we requested that information from the Smithtown School District. Their numbers indicate an aging community across all grade levels over the past 10 years with continuous declines in the K- 5 school populations over t those 10 years. These numbers are consistent with those Countywide. Theses continuing declines are projected by the school district and regionally.

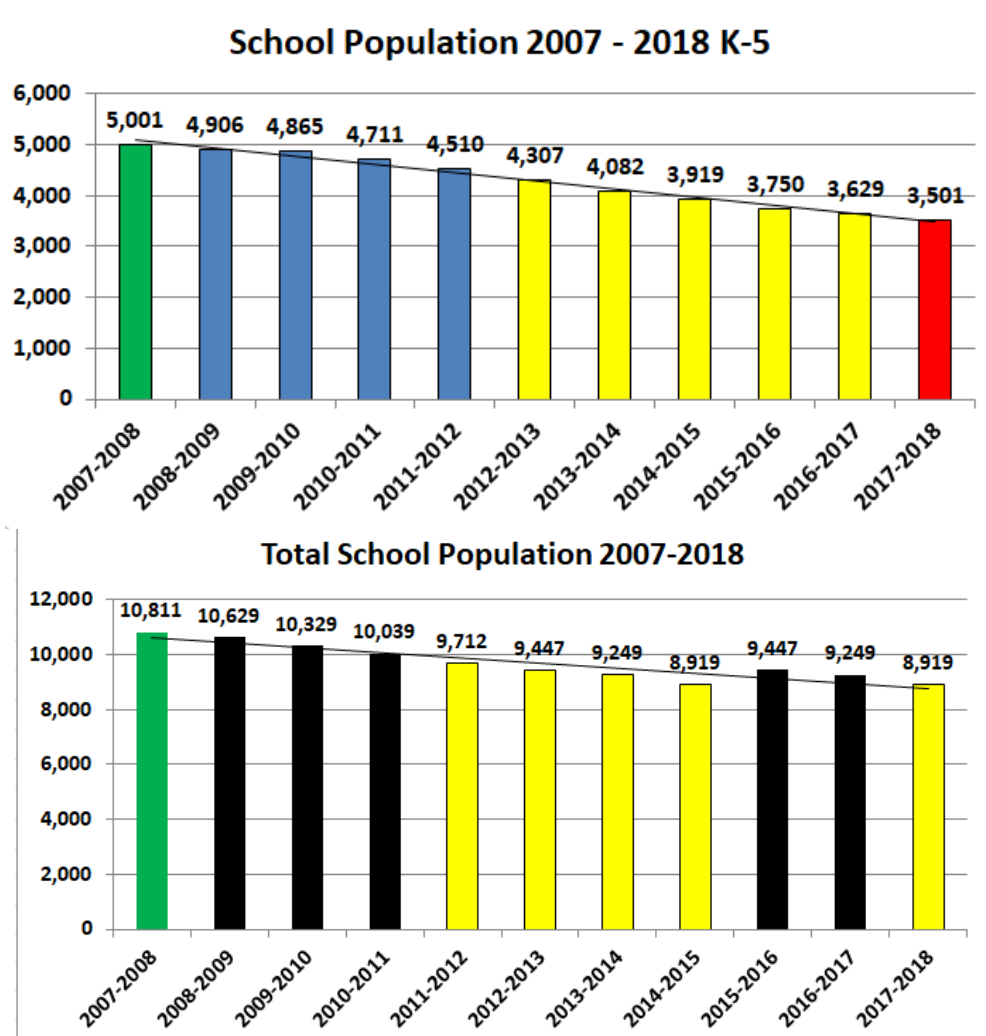


Figure 36: Declining Smithtown School Populations 2007 - 2018

Price History

DATE	EVENT	PRICE
02/02/18	Listed for sale	\$990,000 -3.4%
12/02/17	Listing removed	\$1,025,000
10/02/17	Price change	\$1,025,000 -2.3%
09/01/17	Price change	\$1,049,000 -4.5%
06/01/17	Listed for sale	\$1,099,000

Price History

DATE	EVENT	PRICE	AGEN
02/12/18	Listed for sale	\$1,050,000 -4.5%	
02/01/18	Listed for sale	\$1,100,000 +5.3%	
12/01/17	Price change	\$1,045,000 -4.9%	
09/20/17	Price change	\$1,099,000 -1.8%	
07/06/17	Price change	\$1,119,000 -6.8%	
05/17/17	Listed for sale	\$1,200,000	
09/08/16	Listing removed	\$1,200,000	

Figure 38 Zillow home price histories of 2 sample properties

These real estate facts reflect those that I have found in other NYS communities where there are declining and aging populations. If these findings are accurate they indicate that there is and will be a growing demand for service especially emergency medical services.

- The shrinking and aging population base also has a direct impact on the recruitment and retention of Volunteers for fire rescue services.

Potential Fire Station Location Suggestions

During this study it became clear that the St. James Fire District must reexamine: fire station locations; the ability of the community to support more than 1 fire station; the location of any fire station(s) to assure prompt response to emergency incidents. The reexamination calculations should also include the response from and to neighboring fire stations.

The most recent fire station proposals have been to construct a new station at the location of Station 2 and to close Station 1. The many valid reasons for these actions have not been well accepted by some people in the community and by some in the fire department. As shown in the section of this report “Head of the Harbor Concerns about travel Distances & Response Times”, there is not a great deal of impact on response times and travel distances with either current station location when considering all factors. The primary factors that should be considered are building conditions at both stations and the costs for construction and ongoing maintenance. However, there are always a great many other issues that impact on the selection of sites for fire stations including local politics and community views.

As noted previously the proposed design for a new station to be located at Station 2 needs to be reviewed and improved to meet the character of the neighborhood as well as the fire rescue service standards of today and the demands of the future. There is valid concern in the greater community that Station 1 should be preserved as the historic structure that it is and there is fear that if sold Station 1 were to be sold it would be resold and torn down. There are also the very important factors of considering the total cost for any project for construction and operation and the long term impacts of those costs on all taxpayers.

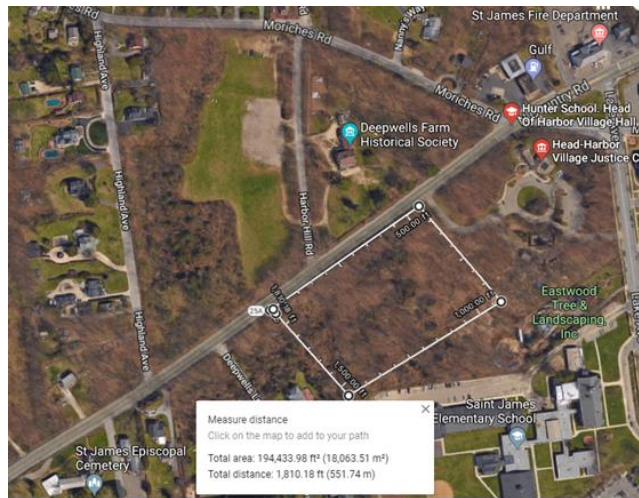
If the Fire District and The Village of Head of the Harbor can come to an agreement to consolidate the Village into the Fire District as recommended in this report I offer the following recommendations and sites for consideration:

Site Recommendation 1: Alternative 1 Station 1; Apparatus bays and service equipment and storage and other facilities note in this report could be constructed behind Station 1 built on a 30 degree angle of approach from the current right side driveway so apparatus can drive directly from route 25A into apparatus bays. An easement driveway to/from Moriches Rd would provide ease of exit for apparatus. The first floor of the historic structure of Station 1 could be reconfigured to provide: Bunk rooms; Rest rooms with showers for male and female emergency responders; Offices for Chief Officers and Company Officers; Kitchen, Dayroom Training & Recreation room for on duty personnel. The entire structure should have an automatic sprinkler system and standby emergency power and new HVAC. The roof of the apparatus bay structure could be solar panels for energy cost savings. This site alternative addresses the concerns of residents of Head of the Harbor and preserves the historic fire station for fire rescue use.



Figure 39: Station 1 proposed station site

Site Recommendation 2: Alternative Site 2: Vacant land site of 5 acres located next to the Village of Head of Harbor offices at 747 North Country Road. A totally new station designed to match the nearby historic structures could be built on this site to meet all of the needs of today and the future while retaining the Historic Station 1 for other public use.



4.9 acres

```

***** 7.-4-4.5 *****
N Country Rd
7.-4-4.5 311 Res vac land COUNTY TAXABLE VALUE 5,000
Petervary Nicholas Smithtown Sch D 473401 5,000 TOWN TAXABLE VALUE 5,000
474 North Country Rd 1-44851 Tc-73 5,000 SCHOOL TAXABLE VALUE 5,000
St.James, NY 11780 Petervary Nicolette Est LB001 Smithtown Library 5,000 TO
Lot 26 #9362 LT002 Arterial hwy lights 5,000 TO M
ACRES 5.90 OA009 Omitted Assessment09 .00 MT
FULL MARKET VALUE 381,679 WD004 St james water dist 5,000 TO C
5,000 TO M
  
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Figure 40: Proposed station site 2 with current owner and market value information

Site Recommendation 3: If Alternative Site 1 or 2 is selected for the new station the Fire District could sell or lease the property facing Woodlawn Ave and part of Jefferson from the parking lot to Woodlawn for housing development. The Fire District could retain the remainder of the property of district offices and related activities. The proceeds from the sale or lease of this property could be used to fund the new construction and operations.



Figure 41: Station 2 site area to be sold or leased and retained by the Fire District

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic Recommendation 1: The Strategic Planning Committee should be composed of members of the Community, Emergency Responders, Fire Department and Fire District Officers. <i>Details of this committee's composition will be in the body of this report.</i>	10
Strategic Recommendation 2: There is an immediate need to Identify, Recruit and Retain more Volunteers especially focusing on bringing younger Volunteers into the agency.....	21
Strategic Recommendation 3: There should be a regional planning committee to review the ages and conditions of all apparatus in the region to determine a replacement schedule that will assure that the regional fleet is sufficient and ready for service and that there is a system to assure ready reserve apparatus.....	24
Strategic Recommendation 4: The Fire Commission should consider all of the factors in this report carefully and conduct and complete a broad range Strategic Planning initiative before acting to hold a referendum to transfer title of Station 1 to anyone.	25
Strategic Recommendation 5: The Fire District should not give up title to the Station 1 property until such time as the Fire District has completed an extensive community and member driven Strategic Planning process and closely examined all potential uses and options for the use Station 1 and all other properties.....	25
Strategic Recommendation 6: Examine how EMS service time demands impact the personal lives and schedules of Volunteers and develop plans to staff this service to avoid breaking the valued Volunteer system.....	27
Strategic Recommendation 7: It must be a priority to assure that every person who will serve in a command and supervisory role is trained to the appropriate Incident Command levels before they assume those roles.....	32
Strategic Recommendation 8: Policies must be instituted that assure that ICS is utilized in practice at EVERY incident from the arrival of the first unit until the incident has been fully mitigated.	32
Strategic Recommendation 9: No matter what location is selected for any fire station in any community it is important to involve the greater community in what the appearance of the structure will be. Some agencies have even held public contests for concept drawings of what the members of the community think the appearance of what their new station should look like to involve the greater community.	40
Strategic Recommendation 10: The St. James Fire District should establish a fire rescue Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Planning process should involve all levels of the fire rescue service and members of the community. Strategic Planning should be an ongoing community process.....	47
Strategic Recommendation 11: The St. James Fire District Commission should act promptly to address the issues regarding facilities in this report and create a broad based Fire Rescue Strategic Planning Committee with supporting specific duties sub committees to address the findings and recommendations in this report.....	47
Strategic Recommendation 12: The Commissioners of the St. James Fire District should invite the Elected Officials of the Town of Smithtown and Village of Head of the Harbor and other Villages and Fire Districts and Members of the greater community to participate in the fire rescue services Strategic Planning Committee and process.	47

Strategic Recommendation 13: A PRIMARY goal of all planning efforts must be to address safety for all emergency responders as well as safety of the public. 48

Strategic Recommendation 14: The Strategic Planning Committee should examine all revenue sources and funding mechanisms, including the 2% foreign insurance funds, to maximize the benefits of each funding source for fire rescue services. 49

Strategic Recommendation 15: There is a need to develop plans so that the State 2% foreign insurance funds can be used even more effectively as part of a community wide Volunteer recruitment and retention program..... 49

Strategic Recommendation 16: The Fire District should apply for a Local Government Efficiency Grant this year, before the deadlines. The goal of this Grant should be to fund Strategic Planning efforts to benefit all taxpayers. This Strategic Planning initiative should be held with the leaders of the Village of Head of the Harbor and other Villages and Fire Districts to expand current *“shared service agreements in place with all levels of government (e.g., other villages, towns, county, fire districts, ambulance services... etc.)... governmental innovation and inter-municipal cooperation, all to the benefit of the taxpayer...”* 51

Strategic Recommendation 17: The Fire District and the Village of Head of the Harbor should enter negotiations to merge Village Fire Protection services into the St. James Fire District to equalize tax impact to taxpayers in the total merged area. Such a merger would also reduce the Village budget by over \$319,000 which would have a positive impact on the Village’s efforts to contain costs under the State tax cap limits. 52

Specific Recommendations

- Specific Recommendation 1: It is my professional opinion and strong Specific Recommendation that the Fire Commission should Take No Action to conduct a public referendum to sell this property AT THIS TIME. 10
- Specific Recommendation 2: Station 1 should be preserved as a community landmark building no matter who owns it now and in the future. If possible this structure should be officially registered as a National Historic structure. Future use of this building under any ownership could include being a local museum dedicated to the history of the community and the fire rescue services in the community. 15
- Specific Recommendation 3: We recommend a detailed engineering study of the entire support structure for the first floor specifically and an inspection by a certified code enforcement official/fire marshal of the entire building to assure compliance with local fire prevention and building codes. 17
- Specific Recommendation 4: We recommend that the ceiling hole above E 431 be fire stopped and repaired immediately..... 18
- Specific Recommendation 5: If the location of Station 1 is to continue 19
- Specific Recommendation 6: The Fire Commission and the Fire Company should immediately order the closing of the bar at Station 1. 20
- Specific Recommendation 7: The Fire District and the Fire Department together should review, revise and enforce policies regarding alcohol and drug use department wide. 20
- Specific Recommendation 8: There is a need for Fire Company and the Fire Commission to identify and understand the personal life conditions and department conditions and facilities that would attract a younger generation to the Volunteer fire rescue service..... 21
- Specific Recommendation 9: A doorway should be created from the exercise room to the apparatus bay section of the building to provide ready access to that area by emergency responders who are using the exercise equipment. 23
- Specific Recommendation 10: If New York State fails to change the laws that prohibit Fire Districts from billing for EMS services the Fire District should immediately work with its attorneys to create a separate EMS agency that does have the authority to bill users for EMS services so that those fees remit to the Fire District to cover the costs of these operations. 27
- Specific Recommendation 11: It should be the duty of company officers to review all alarm records at least weekly to assure accuracy in the recording of response time information. An Assistant Chief should review response time data at least monthly to assure that response time goals are being met. 27
- Specific Recommendation 12: The Operations planning committee should review where Volunteer responders keep their PPE with a goal to assure that each Volunteer is able to respond directly to the scene of an incident with their PPE. That policy must also assure that PPE is kept and transported contaminate free and that contaminated PPE is not placed back into private vehicles or on apparatus without proper packaging to prevent cross contamination. 28
- Specific Recommendation 13: The Operations planning committee should review EMS response to develop a response strategy that assures prompt response to the scene of each EMS incident by properly trained and equipped EMS responders. That initial response could be in responder's

private vehicles that should be identified as EMS responder vehicles with magnetic signs and have NYS approved EMS responder emergency lights. Unneeded fire apparatus should not respond..... 28

Specific Recommendation 14: Each EMS responder should be provided with the drugs and equipment that they have been trained and authorized to use as well as the PPE required to properly perform their duties safely and efficiently. 29

Specific Recommendation 15: Automatic Defibrillators should be located in many areas around the St. James Fire District including at museums, stores, restaurants and recreation areas. Police officers should carry AED devices in their vehicles and be trained in their use. Provision of automatic Cardio Defibrillator on-site and encouraging members of the local community to train in CPR will improve cardiac survival rates. 29

Specific Recommendation 16: Establish a program where Volunteers have the opportunity to schedule when they will be on duty and able to serve as emergency responders. The pre-scheduling of duty time and training activities to better fit the needs of modern families will allow more people the opportunity to serve their community within their busy life schedules. .. 30

Specific Recommendation 17: Fire stations should each be equipped with facilities that will accommodate on duty staffing in an atmosphere that would provide a welcoming and comfortable experience. 30

Specific Recommendation 18: Once fire station facilities have been created to accommodate on duty staffing there should be an active recruitment of local college students who are, or can become trained emergency responders to become St. James Fire District emergency responders in return for the District providing living quarters..... 30

Specific Recommendation 19: The Contract for service between the St. James Fire District and the St. James Fire Department, and others, should require that the Fire Department provide annual documentation demonstrating that each emergency responder meets the current standards of training required for the position they fill. 32

Specific Recommendation 20: There needs to be consistent and ongoing cross training with all mutual aid agencies that St. James Fire District operates with. 34

Specific Recommendation 21: There should be comprehensive information provided to the Community and All members of the St. James Fire Department about the values of the greater communitywide use of Mutual and Automatic aid..... 34

Specific Recommendation 22: The fire police program should be expanded in the number of fire police, their training and their duties. 39

Specific Recommendation 23: I recommend that the Fire Commission appoint a formal fire station planning committee with members from the fire department and members of the community and that that committee be charged with reviewing recognized reference sources for modern fire station construction and remodeling. 41

Specific Recommendation 24: The minutes' of every Fire Commission meeting and all other matters that are Public Record under FOIL should be promptly posted on the Fire District website. 43

Specific Recommendation 25: All meeting minutes must properly identify which Commissioners voted for or against each vote taken. 43

Specific Recommendation 26: It is vitally important that many of the responses and issues raised by emergency responders regarding personnel issues be primarily dealt with by the leadership of the Fire Department and not the Fire Commission. It is important that the Fire Commission bring these issues to the Fire Department leadership to assure that the Fire Department leadership and their Fire Department members address issues that affect the ability of the Fire Department to meet standards and that they assure a positive relationship between the Department and the Commission to the greater community. 44

Specific Recommendation 27: The Fire Commission should promptly review the survey findings reported in both workbooks and establish work committees and a Community driven Strategic Planning Committee with various sub committees to address the findings..... 46

Specific Recommendation 28: The Fire District should immediately provide the Emergency Responder Survey results workbook to the Fire Department leadership for their prompt follow-up efforts to address the findings that impact members of their Fire Department. 46

Specific Recommendation 29: The Strategic Planning Committee shall be comprised of nine (9) members: Two (2) experienced and active emergency responder members of the fire rescue services elected by vote of all active emergency responders (1 Officer & 1 experienced Company officer or Firefighter); Two (2) members of the St. James Fire Commission, One (1) Elected Official of the Town of Smithtown, One (1) elected official Village of Head of the Harbor, and Three (3) citizens who have experience in Strategic Planning and/or a strong desire to serve the community by assuring efficient, effective and safe delivery of fire rescue services. The Citizen and Elected members of the committee should have no personal or family ties to the fire rescue services..... 47

Specific Recommendation 30: Fire Department representatives to the Strategic Planning Committee should assure that Fire Department Policies and Practices are consistent with the Strategic Plans of the Fire district. 48

Specific Recommendation 31: No Elected Representative to the Strategic Planning Committee should also be an active emergency responder. The citizen members should be selected from leaders of the business community and general public..... 48

Specific Recommendation 32: The primary functions of the Strategic Planning Committee shall be to establish a structure that will assure efficiency, effectiveness and safety in the fire rescue services in the St. James Fire District and to address the issues in this report. 48

Specific Recommendation 33: The Strategic Planning Committee should appoint specific Sub Committees to address operational issues. Those operational sub committees should include emergency responders with experience in each area as well as subject matter experts from the greater community. 48

Specific Recommendation 34: The total membership of the St. James Fire Department must be encouraged to be involved in the review, planning and development of the operating guidelines for fire rescue services. 48

Specific Recommendation 35: Current fire rescue members at all ranks should be involved in the review and development of: Training standards and programs; Standard operating procedures; Response standards, including response time, and staffing; Rank structure; Member benefits, such as retirement programs, Service award programs; and Personnel policies. 48

Site Recommendations

Site Recommendation 1: Alternative 1 Station 1; Apparatus bays and service equipment and storage and other facilities note in this report could be constructed behind Station 1 built on a 30 degree angle of approach from the current right side driveway so apparatus can drive directly from route 25A into apparatus bays. An easement driveway to/from Moriches Rd would provide ease of exit for apparatus. The first floor of the historic structure of Station 1 could be reconfigured to provide: Bunk rooms; Rest rooms with showers for male and female emergency responders; Offices for Chief Officers and Company Officers; Kitchen, Dayroom Training & Recreation room for on duty personnel. The entire structure should have an automatic sprinkler system and standby emergency power and new HVAC. The roof of the apparatus bay structure could be solar panels for energy cost savings. This site alternative addresses the concerns of residents of Head of the Harbor and preserves the historic fire station for fire rescue use. 56

Site Recommendation 2: Alternative Site 2: Vacant land site of 5 acres located next to the Village of Head of Harbor offices at 747 North Country Road. A totally new station designed to match the nearby historic structures could be built on this site to meet all of the needs of today and the future while retaining the Historic Station 1 for other public use..... 57

Site Recommendation 3: If Alternative Site 1 or 2 is selected for the new station the Fire District could sell or lease the property facing Woodlawn Ave and part of Jefferson from the parking lot to Woodlawn for housing development. The Fire District could retain the remainder of the property of district offices and related activities. The proceeds from the sale or lease of this property could be used to fund the new construction and operations..... 57

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Appendix

Fire Station Design sources

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-168.pdf>

Preventative Design Requirements.(Note bullet points added by this consultant)

NFPA 1581, Standard on Department Infection Control Program, specifies several requirements for the procedures within special facilities of the station for handling bio contaminated clothing and equipment.

- *Facilities For Disinfecting –*
 - *Fire and EMS departments that provide emergency medical operations shall provide or have access to disinfecting facilities for the cleaning and disinfecting of emergency medical equipment.*
- *Medical equipment shall only be disinfected at a facility that meets the disinfection requirements of this section.*
 - *Disinfection should not be conducted in station kitchen, living, sleeping or personal hygiene areas.*
 - *Design disinfecting facilities in stations with proper lighting, separate ventilation to the outside environment, fitted with floor drains connected to a sanitary sewer system, and to prevent contamination of other station areas.*
 - *Within disinfecting facilities, install a minimum of 2 sinks with hot and cold water faucets and a sprayer attachment, and with drains connected to a sanitary sewer system.*
 - *Sink faucets should not require the user to grasp, with hands, to turn on or off.*
 - *All surfaces should be nonporous material with continuous molded counter top and splash panel surfaces.*
 - *Equip disinfecting facilities with rack shelving or nonporous material. Shelving should be provided above sinks for drip-drying of cleaned equipment. All drainage from shelving should either go into a sink or drain directly into a sanitary sewer system.*
 - *If possible, select front loading industrial laundry machines designed for the type of cleaning required for protective clothing.*
 - *When exposure occurs, clean the equipment and store the waste water from this process in a double wall tank where it can then be pumped to waste transfer vehicles for appropriate disposal.*
- *Cleaning Areas*
 - *Provide a designated cleaning area in each station for the cleaning and disinfecting of protective clothing, protective equipment, portable equipment, and other clothing.*
 - *This cleaning area should have proper ventilation, lighting, and drainage connected to a sanitary sewer system.*
 - *Physically separate the designated cleaning area from areas used for food preparation, cleaning of food and cooking utensils, personal hygiene, sleeping, and living areas;*

- *also physically separate the designated cleaning area from the emergency medical disinfecting facility.*
- **Storage Areas**
 - *Store station emergency medical supplies/equipment, other than that stored on vehicles, in a dedicated, enclosed room protected from the outside environment.*
 - *Store protective clothing and protective equipment in a dedicated, well-ventilated area or room.*
 - *Do not store reusable emergency medical supplies and equipment, protective clothing, and protective equipment in a kitchen, living, sleeping or personal hygiene areas, nor shall it be stored in personal clothing lockers.*
- **Food and Waterborne Infections Nature of the Hazard.**
 - *A number of microorganisms are formed in spoiling food and sewage. If unclean conditions persist, certain microorganisms can grow at rates sufficient enough to harm humans. Other unwanted microorganisms and other contamination can enter the station through cross contamination of water supplies. Cross connections are links through which it is possible for polluting or contaminating materials to enter a potable water supply. Contamination enters the potable water system when the pressure of the polluted source exceeds the pressure of the potable source. Extent of Problem at the Station. Station personnel may be susceptible to food and waterborne based infections through improper food storage and back flow from sewage systems.*
 - *At the fire or EMS station, cross contamination may occur in laundry facilities, sewage systems, and from outdoor operations involving training.*

Another excellent source for design guide information and considerations for modern fire rescue stations designed for today's fire rescue services can be found at:

<https://www.wbdg.org/building-types/community-services/fire-station#emerg>

The article written by Eric G. Mion in 2017 provides an insight into the many factors that impact health and safety as well as the needs for staffing considerations, Building Attributes, Codes and Standards plus the Emerging Issues that face every fire rescue service including St. James.

“A fire station supports the needs of the fire department and the community in which it is located. It must accommodate extremely diverse functions, including housing, recreation, administration, training, community education, equipment and vehicle storage, equipment and vehicle maintenance, and hazardous materials storage. While it is usually only occupied by trained personnel, the facility may also need to accommodate the general public for community education or outreach programs. Fire stations will vary somewhat in design depending on specific mission, i.e., the types of emergencies that will be responded to or the types of fires that will be fought. Usually, the facility differences relate to the size of the firefighting apparatus and facility location. The location of the facility is largely driven by the need to minimize response time...”

BUILDING ATTRIBUTES

A. SPACE TYPES AND BUILDING ORGANIZATION

Major fire station functional areas include the following:

- **Apparatus bay(s):** *This is where the fire fighting and emergency response vehicles are stored.*

- **Apparatus bay support and vehicle maintenance:** These industrial spaces are where the vehicles and other firefighting equipment are cleaned, maintained, and stored.
- **Administrative and training areas:** These include offices, dispatch facilities, and training and conference rooms.
- **Residential areas:** These include the dorm rooms, day room/kitchen, and residential support areas such as bathrooms and fitness spaces.

The two primary drivers for facility layout and functional space adjacencies in a fire station are the following:

1. Ensure that internal response times can be met (time for a firefighter to reach the apparatus and be ready to depart).
2. Separate the diverse and sometimes conflicting functions such as industrial maintenance spaces and residential spaces.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Key design goals and considerations for fire stations include the following:

PROMOTE OCCUPANT QUALITY OF LIFE

Fire stations are generally occupied 24 hours a day, seven days a week by personnel in continuous 24-hour shifts. Therefore, ensuring a comfortable living environment for the firefighters is paramount:

- Provide ample natural light.
- Provide individual dorm rooms, if budget allows.
- Provide ample recreation areas and separate noisy areas (such as a game room) from quieter areas (such as a television room).
- Avoid institutional and unnatural finishes, textures, and colors.

MAINTAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

As above, due to the continuous occupation of the facility by firefighters and the presence of hazardous materials, special attention must be given to designing the facility to accommodate equipment and operational strategies to both protect the occupants and maintain a healthy environment. Consider the following critical elements:

- Provide a secure facility for both personnel and materials such as controlled medical supplies and hazardous fire suppression agents.
- Use non-toxic building materials and improved maintenance practices.
- Ensure good indoor air quality and abundant natural light in the residential and administrative areas.
- Ensure good ventilation of industrial areas such as the apparatus bay and prevent contamination of clean spaces such as the SCBA maintenance areas.
- Ensure that equipment, furnishings, and finishes do not contain asbestos or lead.

ENSURE FLEXIBILITY

As firefighting technology evolves, fire stations need to evolve as well. Consider the following areas:

- *Plan for potential expansion, both in the apparatus bay area and the residential areas.*
- *Ensure appropriate product/systems integration.*
- *Design for the changing nature of work.*

EMERGING ISSUES

One emerging issue in fire station design is the additional attention given to firefighter quality of life. As noted above in design considerations, one way to promote quality of life is to provide separate dorm rooms for each firefighter. Typically, each room is shared between firefighters of different crews/shifts so that the room is never occupied simultaneously. Individual lockers are provided for each firefighter. A bed, nightstand, and desk are shared.

Some departments are taking this one step further and providing separate beds for each firefighter....

Codes that apply to Fire Station design and use

Standard federal and state building codes apply, as appropriate. There are also numerous codes and standards that apply to the staffing and operation of a fire/rescue department; key standards include the following:

- *AC 150/5210–15A Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Station Building Design, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)*
- *Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS), ISO Mitigation (Insurance Services Office)*
- *NFPA 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, National Fire Protection Association*
- *NFPA 1581: Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program, National Fire Protection Association*
- *NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, National Fire Protection Association*
- *NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, National Fire Protection Association*

Fayetteville Fire Department Bunk In program for college students

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM

The term "bunk-in" represents a unique community service opportunity with the Fayetteville Fire and EMS. The "bunk-in" is a person who serves the Department and community in a Volunteer capacity as a "live-in" or "residential" firefighter and/or certified Emergency Medical Technician. In return, the Department provides living accommodations for bunk-ins. All bunk-ins must be matriculated students in the Fire Protection Technology curriculum at Onondaga Community College, live outside of Onondaga County, New York, be an active member in good standing of a fire department in New York State, and be at least 18 years of age.

OBLIGATIONS

- 1. Enter into a written contract with Fayetteville Fire & EMS stipulating duties and responsibilities of each student.*
- 2. A \$250 refundable room deposit is due upon arrival.*
- 3. Maintain grounds, living area, and facilities at the station as assigned to.*
- 4. Fulfill duty schedule that consists of a minimum of three shifts per week. Shifts are 10 hours in length and require the student to be in the station and in uniform.*
- 5. Be up and out of bed by 0900 Monday through Friday, unless work or school hours dictate otherwise.*
- 6. Maintain at least 2.5 GPA at Onondaga Community College (OCC) and be enrolled in Fire Protection Technology. Failure to comply with this could result in termination from the program.*
- 7. Obtain at least the minimum required certification to be an interior firefighter or crew chief (EMS) as defined by Fayetteville Fire & EMS.*
- 8. Attend a Minimum specified amount of fire and emergency training on an annual basis as required by New York State or Fayetteville Fire & EMS.*

ACCOMMODATIONS

- 9. Fayetteville Fire & EMS is in the Eastern suburbs of Onondaga County. The department operates one station. The station is located approximately 15 miles from the OCC campus.*
- 10. Bunk-ins will be provided with a bed, a desk, and a dresser. The station is equipped with a bunkroom with a private bathroom /shower, kitchen, lounge, fitness facility and laundry facilities. Each bunk-in must provide their own linens and towels. Parking is available for personal vehicles on-site. Local telephone usage and cable television is also provided at the station.*
- 11. Full protective gear is provided for all students.*

MISCELLANEOUS

- 12. Officially, all bunk-ins are considered mutual aid members, working with Fayetteville Fire & EMS through a New York State Mutual Aid Agreement via their home department.*

Therefore, accident insurance is furnished through their home department via a VFBL agreement. Written acknowledgement from the Chief of their home department is required prior to admittance to the program.

It must be noted that the Fayetteville Fire Department is a Combination department with Volunteers and Career staff firefighter EMS personnel and officers. All serve together in on duty status. When on duty all wear the same style uniforms and insignia. There is no distinction between the groups and the public generally has no idea if they are dealing with a Volunteer or Career staff member.