

TOWNSHIP *of* HANOVER
Morris County, New Jersey
Fire District Dissolution Study



HANOVER TOWNSHIP
FIRE DISTRICT No. 2



HANOVER TOWNSHIP
FIRE DISTRICT No. 3

An Analysis of the Operational Efficiencies of and the Feasibility of Consolidation or Merger, of Hanover Township Fire District's No. 2 & 3's Fire Protection, Fire Prevention and Emergency Medical Services

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**With cooperation from, the liaisons from the Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire Districts
No. 2 & 3 and Hanover Township
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**HANOVER TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY
FIRE DISTRICT DISSOLUTION STUDY**

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DISCLAIMER: While information contained in this presentation is believed to be accurate and truthful, many different sources were relied upon for certain data and statistics. No explicit guarantees can be made by the report writers with regard to the same. This is a working document and no formal action will be taken without the approval of each Board of Fire Commissioners. For informationally purpose only.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of consolidating the two Fire District's in Hanover Township together in one form or another has been the subject of discussion and exploration for at least the last three decades, conceivably much longer.

In 2004, Hanover Township Fire District No. 2 (District 2) contracted the services of Dr. Harry Carter, of Carter and Associates (also former Deputy Chief with the City of Newark) to conduct a feasibility study on the operations of District No. 2 with some consideration of one "Fire Department" in Hanover Township.

Later in 2005 the Commissioners of Fire District's 2 & 3, along with Hanover Township Committee representatives explored the options of creating a special tax district/entity termed, "The Hanover Township Emergency Medical Services" (T.H.E.M.S.) to explore one Emergency Medical Services shared by both Districts in Hanover Township.

More recently in 2011, another feasibility study was conducted by Kramer and Associates. The Kramer group performed an in-depth study of both Fire District's and Fire Companies and in the end reported ***"In the end this report shows that a complete merger will work and is recommended by this consulting team"***. Kramer and Associates also commented in the report ***"Nothing really will happen with this report, however, unless there is follow-up action to initiate the key components deemed advisable"***. Mr. Kramer also noted in his study his comment; ***THE ULTIMATE REASON FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A FIRE COMPANY IS SUPPOSED TO BE "SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY" ABOVE "SERVICE TO ITS MEMBERSHIP."***

While some of the recommendations of the Carter and Kramer reports may have been achieved wholly or partially over time, any visions for a combined or merged District never solidified.

In late 2021, the State of New Jersey through its Division of Local Government Services, issued Local Finances Notices with grant and funding opportunities in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and The Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) grants, which provide direct support to advance the efforts of Shared Services in all local governments. With the recent grant opportunities presented to both Board of Fire Commissioners, a committee was formed to explore the feasibility of a consolidated or merged Fire District.

The newly formed Committee consulted with District Counsel for both Districts, Mr. Richard Braslow and Township of Hanover Counsel Fred Semrau of Dorsey & Semrau, to consult on the necessary steps to consolidate or merge the two Fire Districts.

Having reviewed and analyzed both the Carter and Kramer report along with conducting research and study, it should be noted that the data gathered, findings enumerated and recommendations submitted were largely valid, sound and reasonable.

The four central factors upon which this report focuses its attention are:

- **Degree and quality of the delivery of fire protection and prevention services**
- **Cost effectiveness and efficiency of administrative, operational and support services**
- **Addressing the disparity of the divergent tax rates in the existing fire districts**
- **Delivery of Emergency Medical Service**

This report focuses on the dissolution of two fire districts and creation of a new single fire district, which would provide a single fire tax throughout the Township of Hanover. As further detailed in this report, this reorganization can provide numerous benefits to the Township residents including:

- **Single command structure for fire services**
- **A potential short and long term annual cost savings**
- **Improved accountability**
- **Standardization and uniformity of fire operations**
- **Standardization and uniformity of emergency medical services**
- **Standardization and uniformity of fire prevention services**
- **Improved deployment of forces**

Challenges of this type of reorganization include the transition period necessary for personnel to adjust to compounded changes in administrative and command structures, operational standards and organizational culture. These challenges, however, are not insurmountable and can be mitigated with good planning and leadership. Further, even more important is the positive attitude and political will of the stakeholders, including the existing Township administration, Committee Members, Fire Commissioners, rank and file career members, volunteer members and union representation. These stakeholders will need to be supportive of the concept.

Consideration should be noted to other alternative structures, however, they may not allow the benefits outlined above to be achieved or may present other challenges. These alternatives include:

- **Municipal Fire Department:** Although this would eliminate the need to create a new administrative structure, this alternative may pose a potential drain on municipal resources, less autonomy for fire administrators, and inability of residents to approve fire budgets and other expenses.
- **Status Quo or Only Dissolve One District:** Although, the Township may choose to do nothing and maintain the status quo or dissolve only one the two districts, the benefits outlined above may not be achieved in this scenario.

There are a number of procedures by which separate fire districts within a municipality can be consolidated into a single fire district that must take place in order to achieve the end result. A bill was passed and signed into law in 2016, Assembly Bill A3006, has somewhat streamlined this procedure, but there remain a number of steps to reach the end result of consolidating a municipality's separate fire districts into a single fire district.

Pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 40A:14-90.2**, titled 'Consolidating two or more fire districts within one municipality,' the necessary steps are as follows:

1. In order to consider the consolidation of fire districts within the Township, the Township Committee will need to receive resolutions adopted by the commissioners of each of the fire districts to be included in the consolidation, expressing consent to the development of a consolidation plan.
2. If, upon receiving the above resolutions, the Township Committee approves the development of a consolidation plan, then the Committee shall work with the fire district commissioners to prepare the plan, which plan may be prepared in consultation also with the Division of Local Government Services.
3. Upon completion of the consolidation plan, the Township Committee must hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed consolidation.
4. Following the hearing, the Township Committee must vote on a resolution to consolidate the fire districts pursuant to the consolidation plan.
5. If a resolution is adopted by the Township Committee to consolidate the fire districts, the Township Committee must then apply to the Local Finance Board for approval to consolidate the fire districts pursuant to the consolidation plan. Notice of the impending consolidation, the governing body resolutions authorizing consolidation, and a copy of the proposed consolidation plan, must be sent to the Local Finance Board, which will schedule a hearing on the application within 60 days of receiving the Township Committee's application.
6. The Local Finance Board in deciding on the Township Committee's application, will consider whether the consolidation is an "efficient and feasible means of providing and financing the service."
7. Upon approval of the consolidation plan by the Local Finance Board, or upon the Township Committee's adoption of the Local Finance Board's conditions to approving, the consolidation plan shall be considered finally adopted by the Township Committee, and the assets and debts of the fire districts to be consolidated shall be reapportioned pursuant to the consolidation plan.
8. Once all of the above steps have taken place, the consolidation becomes operative after the next fire district election (presuming the election follows the final adoption of the consolidation plan by at least 29 days), during which new commissioners for the consolidated district are elected.

Pursuant to the change in law, the above steps are necessary for the Township to consolidate its fire districts.

A strategy to elect a Board of Fire Commissioners for the new district pursuant to 40A:14-72 which states in part that "...The initial election for a newly created fire district may take place on another date as a governing body may specify under N.J.S. 40A:14-70 but the annual election thereafter shall be held on the third Saturday in February...." And further that "...The legal voters thereat shall determine the amount of money to be raised for the ensuing year and determine such other matters as may be required."

II. DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE TOWNSHIP OF HANOVER is a township in Morris County, New Jersey, United States, which contains a land area of 10.52 square miles, with an additional 0.20 square miles of water area. In 2018, Hanover Township ("Hanover") was estimated to have 14,428 residents, which is a gain of 716 persons from 2010. From 1940-1980, the population in Hanover more than quadrupled, with its greatest gain occurring in the 1950's (+148.4%) when the population more than doubled. After declining in the 1980s, the population has increased in the last two decades, gaining nearly 2,200 persons over this time period. Forecasts project the population to be 15,703 in 2040, which would be an 8.8% increase from the 2018 population estimate and a gain of 1,275 persons.

The median age in Hanover has increased slightly from 43.9 years in 2010 to 44.5 years in the 2014-2018 ACS, which is above the median age in New Jersey (40.0). During the same time period, the percentage of people under the age of 18 years, which corresponds predominantly to school-age children, declined slightly from 22.2% to 21.3%.

Median family income increased from \$115,341 in the 2006-2010 ACS to \$143,718 in the 2014-2018 ACS, a gain of 24.6%. By comparison, median family income in New Jersey is \$101,404, which is much lower than that of Hanover. During this time period, the percentage of school-age children (5-17) that are in poverty declined from 2.0% to 0.9%.

General Township Budget Information (2021 Municipal Budget): Averaged assessed home value in Hanover Township is \$426,500. Apart from fire district taxation, the amount to be raised by taxation in 2021 to support municipal tax levy (\$17,900,345.62) and local and County taxes (\$56,497,382.12) Hanover Township 2021 Tax levies are as follows:

MUNICIPAL PURPOSE TAX 0.452 (23.96%)

MUNICIPAL LIBRARY 0.00 (0.00%)

MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE 0.015 (0.79%)

FIRE DISTRICT TAX (avg. rate/total levies) 0.083 (4.28%)

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 0.703 (37.19%)

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 0.362 (19.12%)

COUNTY PURPOSES 0.270 (14.24%)

COUNTY OPEN SPACE 0.008 (0.42%)

TOTAL 1.893 (12.45%)

2022 Hanover Sewer Usage Fees (separate from above) avg. \$630.40 (Sept.-March 2022)

In March 2019, Hanover approved a settlement agreement regarding its affordable housing obligation and identified potential residential developments to address the obligation. As such, a total of 2,128 non age-restricted multi-family housing units are proposed in Hanover, whereby 325 units will be affordable. Currently, three of the five developments are under construction.

In the case of the planned PILOT program for the River Park Development, the Township Committee desires that the revenues received from the PILOT be specifically dedicated to the reduction of municipal taxes and to providing dedicated funds to certain entities according to the below distribution schedule. It should be noted that distribution of revenue under the PILOT program, below, essentially mirrors the distribution of property tax revenue collected in Hanover Township.

1. Hanover Township Local School District ----- 37%
(This percentage is mandated by law and a levy set by the County of Morris Board of Taxation)
2. Hanover Park Regional School District----- 19%
3. Township of Hanover----- 35%
4. Hanover Township Fire District No. 2----- 4%
5. County of Morris----- 5%

The following question was raised to the Hanover Township Committee:

Q: Would anyone be disadvantaged by the planned PILOT program for the River Park Development?

A: We project that, ultimately, the Township, the local schools, and the Fire District will see revenues at least equal to those that would result from regular property taxes being assessed to the River Park Development. Moreover, pursuant to the Township's prospective arrangement with River Park, the developers will be responsible for providing many of the services that are normally provided by the Township, which will result in significant additional cost savings for the Township. It is possible, however, that both the County and the Open Space Preservation Trust will see reduced revenues as a result of the planned PILOT program for the River Park Development.

(Source: Hanover-PILOT-QA-DOCUMENT "TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE TO INTRODUCE AN ORDINANCE ON OCTOBER 10, 2019 AUTHORIZING A PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES AGREEMENT")

TWO SEPARATE FIRE DISTRICTS serve the fire protection, prevention and emergency medical services needs of Hanover Township. Each of the two fire districts is an autonomous local unit of government or “authority” with its own budget and taxing authority pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-70 et seq. Administrative authority of each district is under a publicly- elected five-person Board of Fire Commissioners. Under the present system (two separate “decentralized” fire districts), there are 10 Fire Commissioner Seats township wide. Each of the two Fire Commissioner Boards is responsible in their respective fire jurisdictions for preparing budgets (subject to local adoption and state approval), contracting services and/or employing and managing personnel, collective bargaining with union employees, maintenance and repair of its facilities, apparatus and equipment, capital improvements and related functions including but not limited to statutory and regulatory compliance in all policies, procedures and practices.

The fire districts typically contract with volunteer fire companies for services but notably both fire districts that were studied in this report also employ some number of uniform firefighters of various ranks (and operating under two separate collective bargaining agreements) tasked to handle general day- to -day operations and respond as needed to fire emergencies, emergency medical and other calls for service.

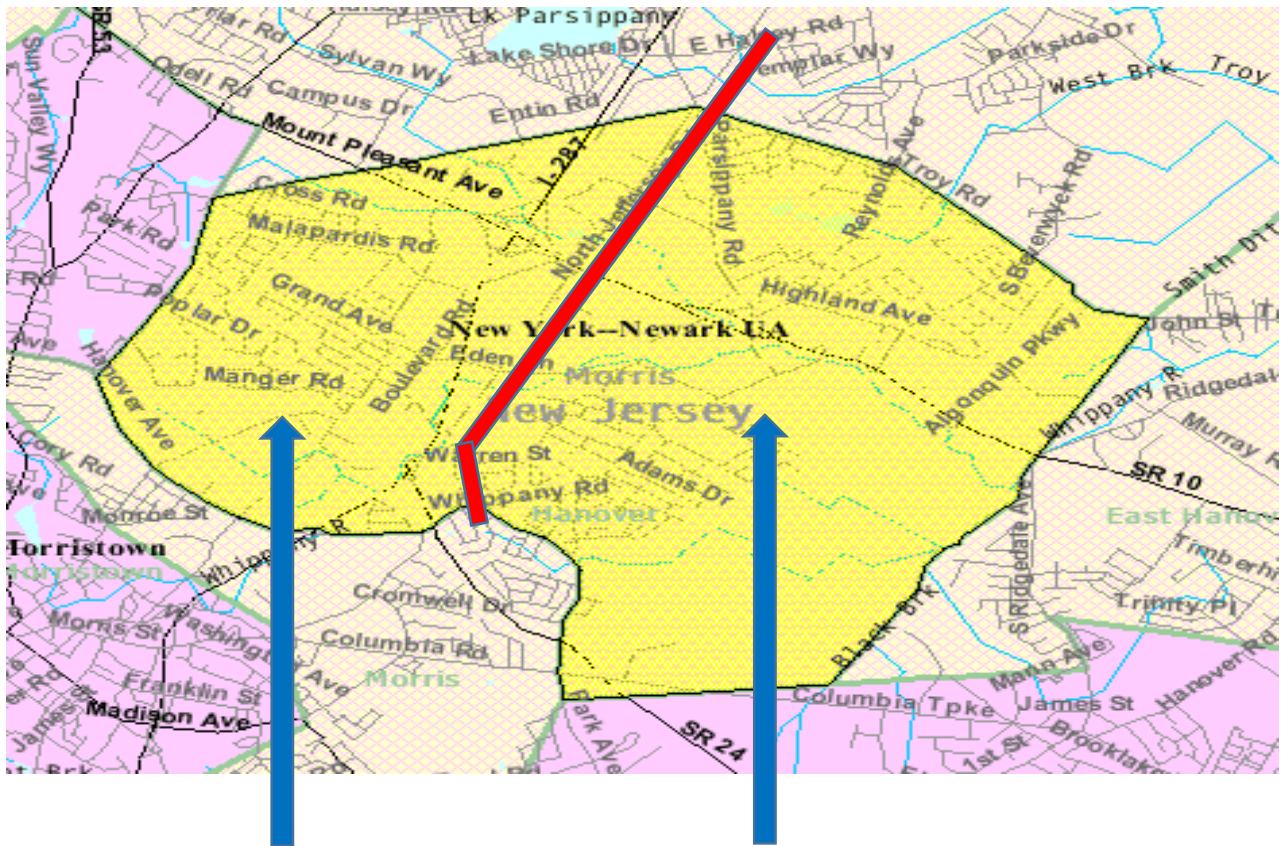
Standing mutual aid agreements and emergency response protocols exist among the township fire districts along with contiguous/neighborhood fire service organizations. Cooperation among these agencies particularly at scenes of emergencies and during other times of need appears to be stout and reliable, but in some ways the multiple district system may restrict optimum utilization of available resources.

Another inherent criticism that has befallen the multiple district system in place is the lack of an equalized fire district tax rate throughout the township. While the township wide municipal purpose tax rate for 2021 is 0.494 (up from 0.452 in 2020 (9.32%)), the two subject fire district tax rates in that same period range from 0.079 on the low end to 0.94 on the high end. *Certainly the matter of “tax fairness” remains a subject of considerable importance to the Township residents in the formulation of optional fire protection & EMS service alternatives in Hanover.*

The two fire districts in the Township are detailed below:

DISTRICT#	YEAR ESTABLISHED	COMPANY	FIRE STATION
2	1921	Whippany Fire Company	10 Troy Hills Road
3	1923	Cedar Knolls Fire Dept.	82 Ridgedale Ave.

MAP OF HANOVER TOWNSHIP SHOWING TWO FIRE DISTRICTS



Fire District No. 3

Fire District No. 2

FIRE DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION has been a subject of discussion in Hanover Township for well over two decades. In late 2021, Fire District No. 3, Chief Chad DiGiorgio provided a presentation and grant opportunities on the merits of fire district consolidation to the joint Bureau of Fire Prevention. That same evening Hanover Township Committeeman, Brian Cahill presented the two Districts with a verbal and written letter of support of the Township and the Township Committee. The presentation was generally well-received and the stage was set to breathe new life into the push for consolidating fire districts.

In January 2022 a Committee was formed with two Commissioners of each of the perspective Fire Districts, both Fire District Chief's and Hanover Township Committeeman Cahill. In March 2022 both Fire District's adopted a resolution in support of the exploration and feasibility of consolidation.

A sub-committee was also formed in February of 2022 and Chief James C. Davidson, (ret.) was identified as a project manager to lead a stakeholders group. The purpose of the sub-committee was to meet with and interview with the stakeholders of the Fire District and Fire Companies. With their cooperation and assistance, several key Work Groups were identified (subjects that required further study) and apportioned as follows:

Sub-Committee

The participating stakeholders were encouraged to assist and collaborate with the subcommittee project manager assigned by the Committee. Arrangements were made to share this sub-committee list with the Commissioner Committee for the purpose of inviting them to participate, provide input and otherwise assist the Committee with this undertaking. Responses from the stakeholder groups are included in **Appendix B**.

Identified stakeholder groups invited to share their input:

1. Cedar Knolls Fire Department – Volunteer membership
2. Whippany Fire Company – Volunteer membership
3. FMBA 109
4. Cedar Knolls Fire Department Exempt Assoc.
5. Whippany Fire Department Exempt Assoc.
6. Hanover Twp Fireman's Relief Assoc.
7. Administrative Staff – Conducted by Chief DiGiorgio and Chief Perrello
8. Line Officers – CKFD
9. Line Officers – WFD

III. FIRE STATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A total of two active fire stations located in Hanover Township are currently in service to the residents of Hanover. The fire stations are somewhat strategically located based largely on the original fire district boundaries and population centers as they existed in the early 1900's. Chart below provides the station designations, locations and key construction/renovation dates of the fire stations:

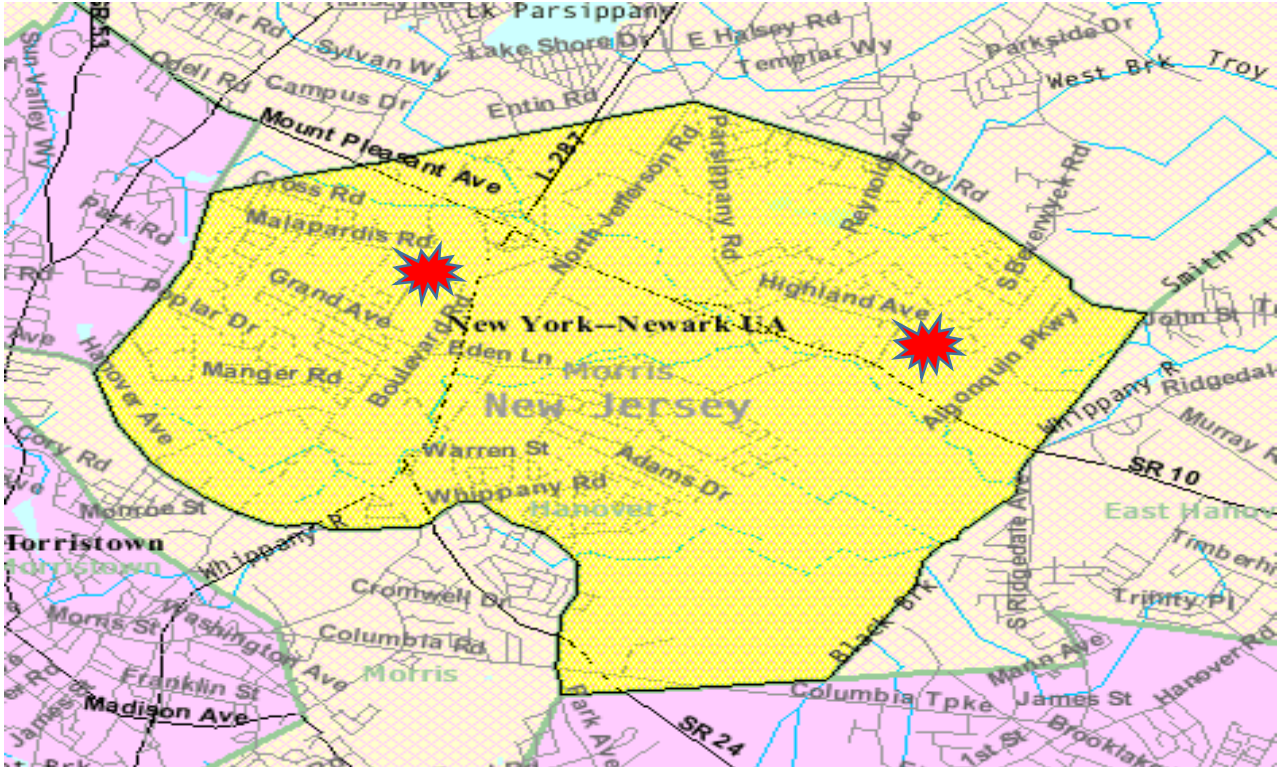
Fire District	2	3
Year Built/ Renovated	2021	1936/1952/1974
Apparatus Capacity	7	5
Personnel Overnight Capacity	5	4
Held in Public Trust	Yes	Yes
Outstanding Mortgage	Yes	No
Other Debt	Yes	No
SCBA Compressor	No	No
Emergency Generator	Yes	Yes
Turnout Gear Washer	No (Shared)	Yes
Hall Rental	No	No
Other	*	**/**

**Radio tower rental to cell phone providers (Whippany Fire Company)*

*** Parking lot rental to the United States Post Office (Fire District 3)*

**** Rental of parking lot/spaces from the Cedar Knolls Fire Department Exempt Association (District No. 3)*

MAP OF HANOVER TOWNSHIP SHOWING FIRE STATION LOCATIONS



FIRE STATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: GENERAL ANALYSIS

- Fire station construction dates range from 1936 to 2021 across the two districts
- On-site parking availability ranges from 45 to 142 parking spots; total parking capacity across all two districts is 177, more than adequate to accommodate personnel, guests and social events
- Fire station capacities to house apparatus range from 5 to 7 units; total apparatus housing capacity across both districts is 12 units, more than adequate space to house apparatus
- Fire station capacities to accommodate firefighting personnel assigned to overnight duty shifts range from 4 to 10; total overnight staffing capacity across both districts is 9 individuals, adequate overnight duty shift space to accommodate as many as 9 or 10 properly staffed fire companies and modest command staff.
- Both of the fire district station houses are held in public trust by the fire districts
- (District 3) fire station is held in public trust along with (District 2) fire station. In District 2's fire the Whippany Fire Company provides "rent" for the use of the antique bay and hall from the Whippany fire company.

- Neither of the fire district station houses have self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) compressors (to refill breathing air bottles) on site.
- One of the fire district station houses (Districts 3) has turnout gear (firefighter protection wear) washing machines
- Both fire district station houses have emergency power generators on site with varying capacities and degrees of reliability
- Both fire district station houses have in-house alerting systems on site with varying capacities and degrees of reliability

FIRE STATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANNING

1. A needs assessment of all station houses should be conducted for optimum utilization. District No. 3 is currently working with a structural engineer and architect for cost analysis and needs assessments.
2. Fire Station houses should be further and carefully evaluated for staffing accommodations as well as operational and maintenance costs at each location.
3. The fire chiefs continue to assess response time objectives and laying out the most effective assignment of personnel and staging of apparatus to calls for service and in the achievement of such objectives. This includes Emergency Medical Services in both fire stations.
5. A fire station capital plan will need to be closely developed by the to address the capital improvements needed over time to maintain and upgrade the facilities and infrastructure in a sound and manageable fashion.

IV. FIRE APPARATUS AND MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT

The two fire stations in Hanover Township collectively operate 7 pieces of fire apparatus along with a variety of command and support vehicles, each possessing specific design functions and varying capabilities to carry out assigned tasks. Fire District 3 operates two BLS ambulances and currently has one in reserve in District No.2's fire station.

A brief look at the major types of motorized equipment and the main purpose of such units is provided below:

PUMPER ENGINE: The basic unit of the fire service. Main purpose is the control and extinguishment of fire by the delivery of adequate water flows, typically measured in gallons per minute or simply, GPM. These units can also be utilized to assist with motor vehicle extrications as well as search and rescue operations and a variety of non-fire related incidents and calls for service. Pumpers can sometimes be used as a combination pumper/rescue unit, a.k.a. rescue/pumper.

QUINT/LADDER TOWER/ELEVATING PLATFORM: Combination units possessing some capacities of both pumpers (flowing water) and aerial ladders/devices (elevated operations). A "Quint", as the name implies, possesses five basic characteristics; an aerial ladder, ground ladders, a fire pump, a water tank, and hose. Main purpose includes forcible entry operations, gaining access to roof tops and other elevated areas to conduct horizontal and/or vertical ventilation operations, search and rescue, and provision of elevated hose streams. These units can also be utilized to perform motor vehicle extrications as well as a variety of non-fire related incidents and calls for service.

RESCUE TRUCK: Main purpose is to preserve life and minimize injuries at the scene of an emergency. Rescue trucks can be further categorized into three main groups; light, medium and heavy rescue. Each specific category requires an organized collection of specialized equipment and power tools. Specialized training of personnel assigned to rescue units may include fire search and rescue, confined space search and rescue, high/low angle rescue, technical rescue and marine/water/ice rescue.

STAFF VEHICLE: Main purpose is to provide means of transportation for staff personnel in the performance of official duties and assignments. Staff vehicles may be consigned to bureaus/offices/units/personnel such as Assistant Chiefs, Training, Communications, Fire Marshal/Official, Fire Inspector, Fire Prevention/Code Enforcement, and Fire/Arson Investigations.

UTILITY VEHICLE: General purpose vehicle used for a range of support services including but not limited to transport of personnel and equipment, Cascade system (for refilling SCBA air bottles), emergency lighting, snow plowing/salting, traffic control at emergency incidents, motor pool, and general day-to-day support operations typically of an essential but non-emergent nature.

MARINE UNITS: Main purpose is to provide capability to perform water rescue operations. Marine units may include motorized boats of varying sizes, non-motorized boats. None of the marine units in Hanover Township are of the variety that pumps water.

COMMAND: Main purpose is to provide transportation for the fire chief and shift officers to the scene of emergencies or other locations. Command vehicles may also be used to establish a command post (stationary point of incident management) at an emergency or other event.

BLS AMBULANCES: Staffed by two EMT caregivers and provide transports for patients who require basic life support and medical monitoring.

The current overall inventory breakdown shows the following units available for service:

5 Pumper engines

1 Rescue

2 Utility vehicles

1 Quint (combo aerial platform-pumper)

5 Command Units

3 BLS Ambulances

ANALYSIS OF MOTORIZED FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

The table below shows a total inventory of 17 motorized vehicles across the two districts. Projected units to be removed from active service include a 2000 KME Pumper (District 2), with the replacement of a quint*, 2000 Ford F-250 (District 2). Discussion to remove Engine 82 (District #2) and a potential refurbishment of Truck 33 (District 3) should be evaluated and considered moving forward.

MOTOR POOL BY AGE BY DISTRICT AS OF 4/2022						
DISTRICT 2	DISTRICT 3	YEAR	UNIT NUMBER	MAKE	MODEL	TYPE
X		1995	82	US Tank		Pumper
X		2000	85	Ford	F250 - Pickup	Utility Vehicle
X		2000	83	KME		Pumper
	X	2002	33	Pierce		Ladder Truck - Tower
X		2004	80	KME		Rescue Truck
	X	2010	39	International/Horton		BLS Ambulance
	X	2012	34	Pierce		Pumper
	X	2013	31	Chevrolet	Tahoe	Command/Staff Vehicle
	X	2013	37	Chevrolet	Tahoe	Command/Staff Vehicle
	X	2018	38	International/Horton		BLS Ambulance
X		2018	84	Dodge	Durango	Command/Staff Vehicle
	X	2018	30	Ford	F-250 Pickup	Utility Vehicle
X		2019	81	Pierce	Enforcer	Pumper
	X	2019	35	Pierce	Saber	Pumper
	X	2019	36	Ford	Escape	Command/Staff Vehicle
X		2020	86	Ford	Explorer	Command/Staff Vehicle
	X	2021	32	Ford/Demers	F-450	BLS Ambulance

Collectively there are more than a sufficient number of fire apparatus and support vehicles required to adequately serve the fire protection and prevention needs of the entire township. The overall motorized fleet appears to have been properly maintained and general operating status of the apparatus appears adequate. Currently two specialized units (one pumper engine and one rescue truck) are equipped and deployed for motor vehicle accidents (MVAs). Generally, both of the assigned units respond to the initial call for assistance.

FIRE APPARATUS AND MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A complete and thorough annual inventory of all motorized equipment should be performed to include a bona fide mechanical assessment with regard to overall safety and operating condition, maintenance/repair needs/ service history, and expected service life remaining on each unit.
2. Based on the annual fire apparatus and motorized fleet report, an apparatus replacement schedule should be developed and adopted based on the discernable needs of the fire district to replace old units and add to the motorized fleet as necessary for the safe and effective operation of fire apparatus, BLS units and support vehicles.

V. SAFETY AND TRAINING

The rudiments of safety and training in the fire service are perpetually inseparable. That is to say, the very first training lesson given to all entry-level personnel should be the principal rules of safety, and upon that foundation, the importance of good safety practices must be consistently reinforced throughout all training exercises, drills and evolutions as well as in all other workplace environments, i.e. responding to and from emergencies and other calls for service, on the fire ground or other hazard scenes, performing fire inspection and prevention activities, and during the relatively mundane day-to-day activities in the core location where safety is sometimes most often neglected --- the fire station itself. It is equally important to understand and embrace the proposition that good safety practices are the responsibility of all members at every level of rank from the newest recruit firefighter to the fire chief as well as the authority having jurisdiction.

In general, the immutable relationship between safety and training seems to be well-recognized throughout all fire districts in Hanover, but because much of the local training occurs at the individual district levels, some operational procedures, degrees of proficiency and certifications of firefighters and officers understandably vary from one district to another. As an example, currently both designated fire companies respond as Rapid Intervention Companies (RIC) throughout the mutual aid towns. The primary purpose of a RIC is to provide specially trained and equipped firefighting personnel at the scene of an emergency for the rescue of firefighters if the need arises. As a matter of practice, both Districts typically conduct RIC training separately and to the extent possible have standardized RIC equipment and procedures.

Nonetheless, both fire districts maintain some type of local training program to include company drills, P.E.O.S.H.A. required training, shift drills and evening competencies for fire and EMS.

Fire District 3 (Cedar Knolls) also oversees “Special Operations Command” (SOC) training in which members have received specialized technical training in such disciplines as vehicle extrication, high/low angle rescue, confined space rescue operations, structural collapse rescue and trench operations and rescue task force. Although hazardous material response was previously conducted by District 2 (Whippany) some members of SOC team also are certified hazardous material technicians.

Fire District 2 (Whippany) also conducts training in which members have received specialized technical in such disciplines as vehicle extrication, swift water rescue, ice rescue, and hazardous materials operations and technician.

In addition, both districts train to the level of basic life support (BLS) and maintain New Jersey Emergency Medical Technician certification.

Recognizing the need for a more assimilated approach and in an effort to promote enhanced training ground and fire ground safety, increase operational effectiveness through standardized practices and produce practical organizational efficiencies, the Morris County Fire Chiefs Alliance (MCFCA) has assembled a Training Manuals and Best Practice Guides outlining the basic training recommendations for firefighters, company officers and chief officers. This training guideline properly identifies key areas of in-house and off-site training including but not limited to Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Driver/Apparatus Operator, First Responder, Emergency Medical Technician-B (Basic), and Hazardous Material Technician.

To better prepare and equip officers to be competent and respected managers, supervisors, planners and leaders, both Districts require Officers to be New Jersey Division of Fire Safety Certified Fire Officer 1. These training programs embody many of the essential lessons needed by firefighters and fire officers not only to be proficient, but in some instances, to be meet the required training standards for certifications as mandated by the state and federal governments. Adherence to recognized training ground/fire ground standard operational procedures (SOPs) and standard operational guidelines (SOGs) across both districts.

LIMITATIONS

As a result of the foregoing, access to training, levels of training and firefighter proficiencies can vary from district to district. At times, practices in one district are inconsistent with the practices of another.

Both districts presently train and certify members to provide “Basic Life Support” services, and train and certify members to the level of Emergency Medical Technician-B (basic EMT life support services).

Both districts presently maintain cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) defibrillators but on District 3 members are qualified to administer NARCAN and epinephrine.

District No. 3 (Cedar Knolls) as a requirement of the New Jersey Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services (NJOEMS) has retained the services of a Medical Director to assist in emergency medical operational guidelines and monitoring; District no. 2 does not.

District No. 3 (Cedar Knolls) has retained the services of a Health & Safety Officer to assist with occupational health. District No. 3 requires all active responding firefighters and EMT's to forego an annual NFPA compliant physical to remain a responding member.

Both districts utilize web-based training programs such Power DMS to meet education units as well as NJ Learn and VFIS Insurance training programs to assist in compliance training.

Both districts train and certify a number of line firefighters as fire inspectors and in other capacities.

While the districts generally maintain good order and cooperation, the presence of multiple command and training structures can potentially cause confusion or even dissention particularly but not limited to emergency incidents or other stressful events that allow little or no time for discussion or conflict resolution.

Still, both districts have established minimum training standards that ostensibly meet or exceed statutory and regulatory requirements. The missing link is integrating the safety and training practices under a distinct command/training structure and solitary authority having jurisdiction.

VI. OFFICE OF THE FIRE OFFICIAL/LOCAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Pursuant to P.L. 1983, c.383 Uniform Fire Safety Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-196 Uniform Fire Safety Act and N.J.A.C. 5:70 Uniform Fire Code, each local or county jurisdiction having authority must establish a Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) to perform fire inspection/prevention services or relinquish that authority to another LEA by mutual consent or in the alternative, to the State Division of Fire Safety (DFS).

All LEAs (except in locations where the DFS serves as the LEA) are governed by the authority having jurisdiction (i.e. municipality, fire district, county) but are also subject to the statutory authority of the DFS and must be overseen by a state-certified and approved Fire Official, typically appointed by the authority having jurisdiction by ordinance or resolution.

Uniform Fire Code inspections generally involve two types of occupancies; those classified as "life-hazard use occupancies" (LHUs) and those classified as "non-life hazard use occupancies" (Non-LHUs). LHU occupancies must only be inspected by state certified Fire Inspectors. Non-LHU occupancies are not bound by that requirement but only trained and knowledgeable personnel should be utilized to perform such inspections.

LEAs are required to register and inspect both the LHU and Non-LHU occupancies typically on an annual basis (Non-LHUs can sometimes be inspected on a cyclical multiple-year basis).

Annual registration fees are assessed to the LHU business owners through a web-based Registration and Inspection Management System (RIMS) maintained by the State Division of Fire Safety. All LHU registration revenues are paid directly to the State, which subject to satisfactory review of the LEAs performance, rebates 65% of the revenues collected back to the LEAs on a quarterly basis (except in locations where the DFS serves as the LEA, in which case the State keeps 100% of the revenues collected).

LEAs also keep all revenues generated from fines, penalties, permits fees and 100% of all Non-LHU inspections performed and billed. Billing by the LEA for Non-LHU inspections is discretionary.

HANOVER'S MULTIPLE FIRE OFFICIALS/LOCAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Fire inspection and prevention services are handled independently by both districts by two separate Local Enforcement Agencies collectively consisting of the two Fire Chief's assigned as the uniform fire officials. The uniformed career firefighter and fire officers are tasked with performing LHU and Non-LHU inspections while on shift/on-duty. District 2 has five (5) certified firefighter/fire inspectors performing inspections and District 3 with five (5). No civilian office staff is assigned specifically to the LEA. This role is conducted by the fire inspectors in each District.

As part of that contingent, District No. 2 maintains a uniform career firefighter/senior fire inspector performing inspections with District No. 3 a uniform career fire lieutenant/fire inspector who performs "in-service" fire inspections while working on his normal duty shift hours as a shift officer.

The table below illustrates the number of LHU and Non-LHU inspections performed in 2021 in each of the Districts LEAs along with LEA's portion of the LHU registration fees (65% for the LEA and 35% for the State) as well as revenues collected for permits and other fees (LEA keeps 100% of such revenues):

DISTRICT	# OF LHU's	LHU REVENUE	NON-LHU's	NON-LHU REVENUE
2	134	\$47,000	269	\$19,000
3	62	\$32,800	503	\$32,900
TOTAL:	196	\$79,800	772	\$51,900

- Data received from 2021 annual report.

The table below illustrates the current LEA staffing levels compared to a proposed model:

CURRENT LEA STAFFING STRUCTURE

DISTRICT	FIRE OFFICIAL	FF/FIRE INSPECTORS	OFFICE STAFF
2	1	4	Payment Processing
3	1	5	Payment Processing
TOTAL	2	9	

PROPOSED LEA STAFFING STRUCTURE SINGLE AHJ

FIRE OFFICIAL	SENIOR FIRE INSPECTOR	FF/FIRE INSPECTORS	OFFICE STAFF
1	1	8	Payment Processing

OFFICE OF THE FIRE OFFICIAL/LOCAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCY:

EFFICIENCIES OF ONE SINGLE DISTRICT

1. The two existing Local Enforcement Agencies should be joined into a single agency led by one uniform fire official appointed by the authority having jurisdiction and reporting to the chief of the department.
2. To every extent possible and where positions exist to do so, current personnel from the existing LEAs should be maintained within the LEA staffing structure proposed in this report.
3. The Commissioner in consultation with the fire chief and fire official should assess the available fire station to identify the most favorable location for a centralized and publicly accessible Office of the Fire Official capable of accommodating the operation of same.
4. Under the authority of the fire chief and in coordination with work shift officers, the fire official should be responsible to schedule, support and document appropriate and on-going fire prevention activities of the on-duty fire companies, i.e. fire safety education in schools, participation in civic events, senior citizen programs and other suitable community activities.

VII. CAREER AND VOLUNTEER STAFFING/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Perhaps the greatest challenge in transitioning the two fire districts into a single fire district is the conception, design and formation of a new organizational structure. Such a structure must be capable of providing adequate fire protection and emergency medical services coverage in a township with a growing population and expanding economy while doing so in a manner that is cost-efficient and fiscally sustainable.

Presently the exclusive collective bargaining agent across both Hanover fire districts is the New Jersey Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA). Firefighters and Fire Officers are represented by FMBA Local No. 109. In effect, this structure translates to two separate collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) for firefighters and fire officers. There is also one pending professional service contract for one serving fire chief and a resolution with terms and conditions for the other current Chief.

By virtue of a dissolution of fire districts in favor of the creation of a new district or formation of a new entity under another authority having jurisdiction, the labor/service contracts in place as well as the labor force representation by the FMBA will need further review and consideration. This can be completed prior to or following the dissolution. In their place, initial terms and conditions of employment must be established by the designated committee to precede the anticipated selection by the new work force of labor representation and the eventual adoption of new collective bargaining agreements. To obtain further guidance on the process for the selection of an exclusive collective bargaining agent/union representation by a new workforce.

CALLS FOR SERVICE

Calls for service are tracked by the Morris County Fire Communications Center located in Parsippany. The number and types of incidents are electronically filed with the State Division of Fire Safety (DFS) through the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The statistics collected from the Hanover fire districts and statewide by the DFS become part on a nationwide data base of fire department response activities.

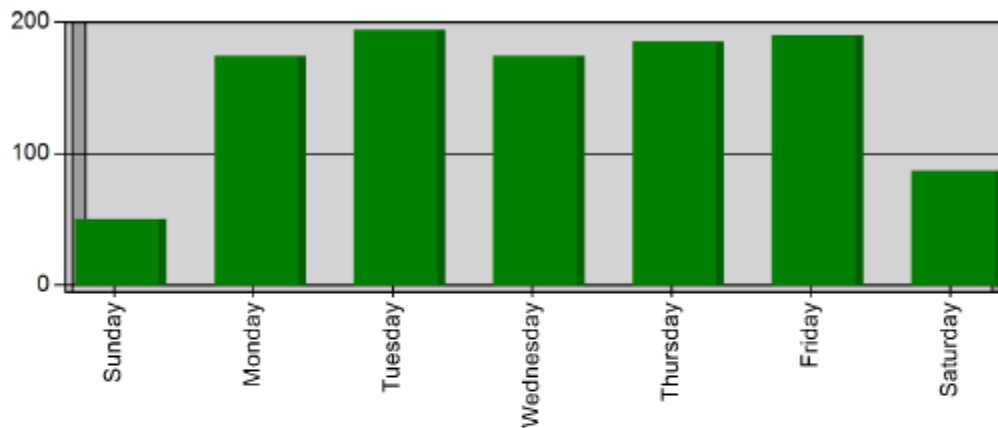
In 2021, the Hanover Township fire districts **collectively responded to 3,399 calls for service**. It is important to note that some of these incidents required a single district response while others required multiple department assistance, meaning that the total number of department responses far exceeded the number of incident responses.

A brief township wide summary of the number and types of incidents in calendar 2021 are shown below:

Fire District #2 (Whippany)

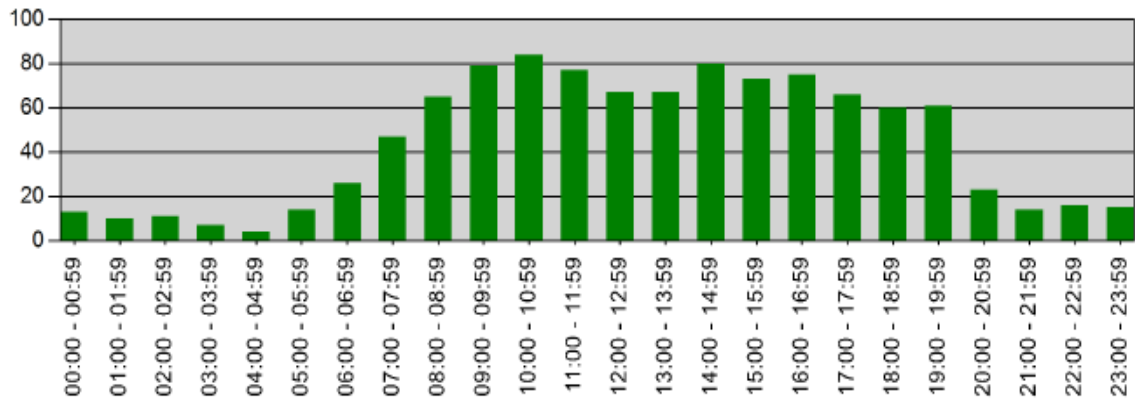
FDID	MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
14122			
	Fires	60	5.7%
	Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheating - no fire	10	0.9%
	Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	584	55.4%
	Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	69	6.5%
	Service Call	54	5.1%
	Good Intent Call	27	2.6%
	False Alarm & False Call	248	23.5%
	Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	2	0.2%
	Total Number Incidents for 14122:	1054	

Incidents by day of the week:



DAY OF THE WEEK	# INCIDENTS
Sunday	50
Monday	174
Tuesday	194
Wednesday	174
Thursday	185
Friday	190
Saturday	87
TOTAL	1054

Incidents by time of day



HOURL	# of CALLS
00:00 - 00:59	13
01:00 - 01:59	10
02:00 - 02:59	11
03:00 - 03:59	7
04:00 - 04:59	4
05:00 - 05:59	14
06:00 - 06:59	26
07:00 - 07:59	47
08:00 - 08:59	65
09:00 - 09:59	79
10:00 - 10:59	84
11:00 - 11:59	77
12:00 - 12:59	67
13:00 - 13:59	67
14:00 - 14:59	80
15:00 - 15:59	73
16:00 - 16:59	75
17:00 - 17:59	66
18:00 - 18:59	60
19:00 - 19:59	61
20:00 - 20:59	23
21:00 - 21:59	14
22:00 - 22:59	16
23:00 - 23:59	15

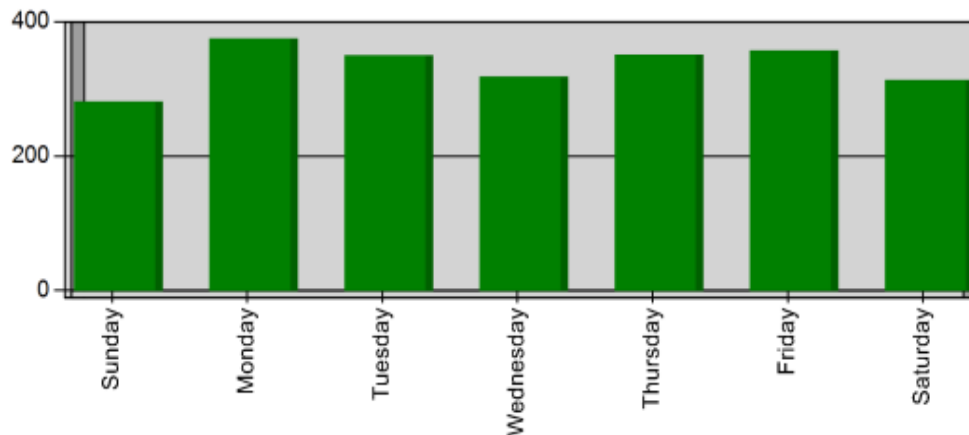
Fire District #3 (Cedar Knolls)

FDID	MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
14123			
	Fires	38	1.6%
	Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheating - no fire	9	0.4%
	Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	1794	76.5%
	Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	88	3.8%
	Service Call	52	2.2%
	Good Intent Call	112	4.8%
	False Alarm & False Call	250	10.7%
	Special Incident Type	2	0.1%
	Total Number Incidents for 14123:		2345

Incidents by day of week

Incidents by Day of the Week for Date Range

Start Date: 01/01/2021 | End Date: 12/31/2021



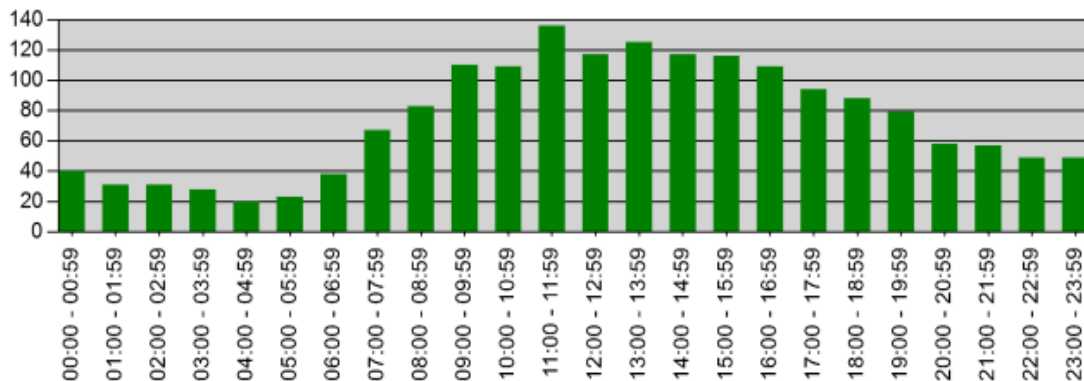
DAY OF THE WEEK	# INCIDENTS
Sunday	281
Monday	375
Tuesday	350
Wednesday	318
Thursday	351
Friday	357
Saturday	313

TOTAL 2345

Emergency Medical Services (EMS-BLS) Incidents by time of day

Incidents per Hour for Incident Type Range for Date Range

Start Incident Type: 300 | End Incident Type: 324 | Start Date: 01/01/2021 | End Date: 12/31/2021



Hour	# of CALLS
00:00 - 00:59	40
01:00 - 01:59	31
02:00 - 02:59	31
03:00 - 03:59	28
04:00 - 04:59	20
05:00 - 05:59	23
06:00 - 06:59	38
07:00 - 07:59	67
08:00 - 08:59	83
09:00 - 09:59	110
10:00 - 10:59	109
11:00 - 11:59	136
12:00 - 12:59	117
13:00 - 13:59	125
14:00 - 14:59	117
15:00 - 15:59	116
16:00 - 16:59	109
17:00 - 17:59	94
18:00 - 18:59	88
19:00 - 19:59	79
20:00 - 20:59	58
21:00 - 21:59	57
22:00 - 22:59	49
23:00 - 23:59	49
TOTAL:	1774

706 EMS Responses in the Cedar Knolls District

784 EMS Responses in the Whippany District

284 EMS Responses assisting mutual aid

1221 – Day Shift (6am-6pm)

553 – Night Shift (6pm-6am)

The data above in association with training requirements, fire prevention activities, apparatus care, fire station duties and other day-to day functions of personnel, provides a valuable insight for the purpose of quantifying the number of properly staffed apparatus needed to respond to and safely/effectively mitigate fires and other hazardous conditions. This information along with other critical factors was applied in this report to formulate the proposed options for the reorganization of staff.

It is noteworthy to mention that within New Jersey's 566 municipalities---comprised of 52 cities, 15 towns, 245 townships, 250 boroughs and 4 villages---there are 185 fire districts, 18 county fire academies, numerous municipal career fire departments small and large as well as a large volume of volunteer fire companies supported in various ways by the municipalities in which they serve. Together these organizations attest to the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all fire protection model but rather each local authority must assess and decide which model best suits the needs and means of its community. With that said, there are nonetheless several considerable advantages to a fire protection and emergency medical services delivery model that utilizes a combination staffing structure (career and volunteer firefighters working together in the same organization). Among those advantages include:

- Immediate availability of some number of assigned career firefighters to respond to emergencies and other calls for service
- Active force of volunteer firefighters augments the career firefighter and EMS crews and further supports the fire department and EMS mission by being scheduled to cover preordained duty rosters (Crew Night staffing)
- Provision of a career path for volunteer firefighters seeking a career in the fire service (which is one of many incentives that can be offered to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters.
- With successful recruitment and retention of volunteer personnel, the authority having jurisdiction will have greater capacity to budget funds for necessary equipment, repairs and capital expenditures
- The volunteer fire service can be a formidable source of community spirit, devotion and organization; volunteer firefighters may also be a valuable resource in helping to better unite and prepare the public for disaster planning and readiness

Examples of just a few fire service organizations from around the State that serve as good working models for the types of municipalities in which they serve include but are not limited to:

Morris Township, Madison, Morristown, Dover, Hamilton Township, Cherry Hill, Cinnaminson, Florence, Jackson, Mount Laurel and Toms River.

CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS

The table below provides a brief overview of the existing career and volunteer staffing levels across the two fire districts:

DISTRICT	STATION	CAREER FF's*	CAREER EMT's**	VOLUNTEER FF's***	VOLUNTEER EMT'S
2	Whippany	5	0	25	2
3	Cedar Knolls	8	12	17	3
Total		13	12	42	5

***CAREER:** Does not include 2 Fire Chiefs/Fire Official

****CAREER EMT'S:** Includes 2-Full Time, 5 Part Time (24 hours per week), 5 Per Diem (24 hours per month), District 3 maintains volunteer certified EMT's

*****VOLUNTEERS FIREFIGHTERS:** Reported as the active number of interior qualified fire volunteer members across the two districts. Also includes junior members between the ages of 16-18 in the capacity of firefighter or emergency medical technician trainee

The table below provides a further breakdown of existing uniform career personnel by district and rank:

DISTRICT	CHIEF	CAPTAIN	LIEUTENANT	FIREFIGHTER/EMT's	EMT'S
2	Whippany	0	0	5	0
3	Cedar Knolls	0	2*	8	12**
Total		0	2	12	12

* In District 3, one vacant Lieutenant position currently exists.

**EMT'S: Includes 2-Full Time, 5 Part Time (24 hours per week), 5 Per Diem (24 hours per month)

REORGANIZATION OF THE UNIFORM CAREER MEMBERS

Starting from the point of the available pool of uniform career members, the possibilities for a new single organizational structure are nearly boundless, though some would arguably be better than others. The organizational model for reorganization of the two existing fire districts provided in this report represents just one viable prospect from among all others. The options shown on the page that follows are based on several critical, or limiting factors, including those that follow:

1. Total existing number of uniform career members
2. Need for a single organizational structure operating under a sufficient, unified command
3. Providing for the proper span of control (supervision) and accountability at all levels
4. Identifying needs for service based on the population served, dimensions and topography of the land and water areas covered, and the magnitude, type and nature of calls for service
5. Of note, the budget analysis included conducted with this report identifies that the newly formed District would retain all current employees of both dissolved Districts.

As illustrated above, the current combined uniform career staff across the two districts provides for:

- 1 Chief of Department
- 1 Deputy Chief
- 2 Lieutenants (First Level Supervisors)
- 12 Firefighter/EMT's
- 12 Emergency medical technicians

28 Total

The proposed organizational structure shown below provides adequate command staff and some number of company officers and firefighters to staff fire apparatus. These structures as shown are based only on the total current career staff and as such would be subject to hiring practices of the authority having jurisdiction and any pending retirements of personnel.

The volunteer factor which will inherently have a major influence on the universal staffing dynamics of the proposed organization will be addressed further on in this section of the report.

**THREE-SHIFT CAREER MEMBER MODEL
WITH A TWO COMPANY AND EMS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:**

3 Lieutenants	From the existing roster of Lieutenants
15 Firefighter/EMT's	10 from the Firefighters rank, two from the Full-Time EMT's plus hire 3 additional Firefighter/EMTs (Currently 9 also conduct fire inspections)
5 Part-Time/Per-Diem	Emergency Medical Technicians

Note: This model assigns fire suppression forces to a 56-hour work week, typically requiring three duty shifts with personnel working one 24-hour work shift for every 48 hours off (a.k.a. the “24-48 schedule”).

This Model allows for both staffed fire and emergency medical services 24/7/365 out of both fire houses.

Increased staffing on the weekdays during our highest call volumes, and lighter staffed on weekends and evenings when our volunteer staff is available to aid with responses.

**THE TABLE OF ORGANIZATION FOR THIS MODEL
FOLLOWS ON THE NEXT PAGE**

Of the 200 most populated communities, 97 percent have the fire service delivering pre-hospital emergency medical service response.¹ Additionally, the fire service provides critical advanced life support (ALS) response and care in 90 percent of the 30 most populated United States cities and counties.²

Some of the first paramedics in the United States were firefighters in such places as Los Angeles County, Seattle, Columbus, Jacksonville, and Miami in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Today, virtually every firefighter in the United States receives medical training as a part of their normal training agenda. Many firefighters are classified as Firefighter/EMT or Firefighter/Paramedic.

There are many system models that the United States fire service uses today to deliver emergency medical services. The three primary models include fire departments using cross-trained/multi-role firefighters for EMS first response and ambulance transport; fire departments using firefighters for EMS first response and civilians who are not cross-trained as firefighters for ambulance transport; and fire departments who use firefighters for EMS first response and non-fire department organizations for ambulance transport.

The model where fire departments use cross-trained/multi-role firefighters for EMS first response and ambulance transport has many unique and distinct advantages over other models. These include:

- Continuity of patient care between first responders and ambulance personnel who are part of the same organization
- Continuity of administration
- Continuity of the same medical training
- Continuity of the same medical equipment
- Continuity of Standardized Operating Procedures
- Continuity of Medical Direction
- Unity of Command
- Ability to deliver medical care while performing specialized rescue in such cases as auto extrication, marine rescue, high-angle rescue, collapse rescue environments, and hazardous material events.

There is also economy of scale savings when using firefighters in a cross-trained/multi-role EMS function.

- Because of the 207(k) exemption of the Fair Labor Standard Act, firefighters can work up to a 212 hours in a 28-day work period (53 hours per week) before being paid overtime. Non-firefighters must be paid overtime for any hours worked over 40 hours.

Other economy of scale savings is realized when EMS first response and EMS ambulance transport are combined into one organization through the elimination of duplicate functions such as administration, training, support functions, and in some cases, the communications center.

Another advantage of a fire-based EMS model is that a firefighter is trained in multiple disciplines. Thus, a single person performs multiple functions as opposed to hiring one person to perform a single function. Firefighters, besides being trained to handle fires and medical emergencies, can also mitigate hazardous material events, perform technical and complicated rescues, and perform fire prevention and education services.

Conclusion: Fire service EMS is the most efficient and effective model for the rapid delivery of all emergency medical services. When time is critical and effective pre-hospital care is necessary, the fire service is well positioned strategically, geographically, administratively, financially, and operationally.

Therefore, the International Association of Fire Chiefs urges all elected and government appointed officials, professional associations and health care providers to recognize and support the provision of emergency medical care first response and ambulance transport by the fire service.

Reference:

¹ *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, February, 2009.

² *IAFC/IAFF Fire Operations Survey, 2005. ADOPTED BY: IAFC Board of Directors on May 7, 2009*

THE REORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Just as it is a prudent strategy in the pursuit of the dissolution initiative to reorganize the current uniform career staff across both fire districts into a sole entity under a single command structure, it is no less obligatory to assess and reorganize the current volunteer forces for the purpose of maximizing the potential service impact that the volunteers can be expected to deliver as an essential component of the new organization.

CURRENT MAKE UP OF THE VOLUNTEER STRUCTURE IN HANOVER TOWNSHIP

DISTRICT	COMPANY	INTERIOR FIREFIGHTERS*	EXTERIOR FIREFIGHTERS
2	Whippany	15	10
3	Cedar Knolls	14	3
TOTAL		29	13

THE CURRENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE MODEL

Not discounting the philanthropic virtues of the volunteer service, the manner in which the energies of the available volunteer members are presently utilized seems somewhat fragmented and minimalized. Fragmented largely because they are spread out disproportionately and absent a standard method of deployment over both districts and both fire companies throughout the township; minimalized by virtue of how infrequently they are assigned to ride on fire apparatus with career firefighters. The current model in both districts regularly assigns a duty roster to place additional fire apparatus in service (roster staffing), and being legitimized to assume company officer or command positions.

There can be no doubt of the diminished role of the volunteer fire companies in Hanover over the years, which at one time was predominantly served by volunteer firefighters supplemented by a modest number of career firefighters, to the present time in which the districts have increased the career staff supported by a lesser number of volunteer firefighters.

Contributing factors to the diminished ranks of volunteer firefighters in Hanover and elsewhere are said to include:

- Increased training requirements and time required to acquire and maintain eligible volunteer status
- An economy that has required or otherwise influenced household income earners to seek secondary employment (or overtime) in place of joining the local fire company
- Urban sprawl and loss of local job prospects that has resulted in potential volunteer firefighter candidates seeking employment opportunities further away from home
- Loss of younger volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians to college and military service and other ventures
- Loss of senior volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians to illness, chronic injury, relocation due to retirement or death

- Loss of volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians to the concerns and constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- No accountability for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians to respond to crew/duty night calls

THE CURRENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE MODEL BY CREW NIGHT

Whippany Fire Department (District 2)

11PM-5AM (M-Su)

11PM-5AM (SATURDAY ROTATION – EVERY 5th WEEK)

POSITION	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
CHIEF OFFICER	1	0	1	0	0	R	0
LINE OFFICER	0	1	1	1	1	R	1
DRIVER	0	1	0	0	1	R	0
FIREFIGHTER/INTERIOR	2	2	3	3	1	R	3
FIREFIGHTER/EXTERIOR	2	3	0	0	1	R	0
JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER	0	0	0	0	0	R	0
TOTAL:	5	7	5	4	4	N/A	4

Cedar Knolls Fire Department (District 3)

10PM-6AM (M-W)

6am-6am (SUNDAY ROTATION – EVERY 5th WEEK)

POSITION	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
CHIEF OFFICER	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
LINE OFFICER	1	1	1	0	0	0	*1
DRIVER				0	0	0	*1
FIREFIGHTER/INTERIOR	2	3	4	0	0	0	*1
FIREFIGHTER/EXTERIOR				0	0	0	*1
JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER				0	0	0	*1
TOTAL:	3	3	5	0	0	0	

*Sunday Rotation for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday crews every fifth week

** Assistant Chief – No set crew/rotation

THE KEY TO REVITALIZING THE VOLUNTEER SERVICE: LEADERSHIP

Revitalizing the volunteer fire service in places where it has not thrived will likely be no easy task. A good first step might be to take a close look at the places where it is thriving and to learn from the experiences of those folks as well as from others who have come to possess a keen understanding of the forces that oppose volunteerism and a creative sense of what makes it work despite the opposition.

THE NEW VOLUNTEER STAFFING MODEL

Following the steps outlined on the previous page with regard to revitalizing the volunteer service, the new local unit must begin from a position of authority tempered by a visibly compelling desire to uphold the respectable time-honored customs and traditions of the volunteer fire service while remaining focused on the mission of the fire department.

Initial placement as a volunteer member of the new organization should be achieved by gaining membership through a bona fide local volunteer fire company subject to criteria set forth by the authority having jurisdiction. Volunteer firefighters currently “in the system” should maintain their eligibility status as members in good standing in the fire company with which they are identified. Training standards and goals must be established and implemented to prepare new and current volunteer members to be capable of serving as firefighters in the new organization with a pathway for company officer and chief officer level certifications as well as potentially laying the ground work for those eligible volunteer members aspiring to transition into the career service.

On that basis and starting with the 42 active volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians presently serving across the two districts, the assignment of volunteer members must be adapted to align with the staffing needs of the new organization. Emphasis must be on the ability for volunteers to augment the career staff by being available to respond to fires, emergency medical and other calls for service at all times either from a remote but nearby location or from a state of readiness at an assigned fire station (Crew/Duty nights) as required by the department.

For example, the staffing model previously outlined in this section does not provide for career firefighter “cover positions”. Cover positions are those positions staffed on a tour of duty in anticipation of regularly occurring vacations, sick leave, injury leave and other manners of absenteeism that result in fire apparatus being understaffed or the assumption of unwarranted overtime costs and liabilities.

In cases wherein cover positions are not filled with career members, resulting in the assigned fire apparatus having less than the recommended complement of firefighters per fire apparatus, to every extent possible volunteer firefighters on the volunteer staffing should be utilized.

Volunteer staffing roster a.k.a. “Crew Nights”, a method of staffing apparatus by scheduling volunteer firefighters to pre-determined duty schedules, commonly at 6 to 12 hour intervals, for which they would typically be eligible to receive certain non-salaried benefits including but not limited to LOSAP points, clothing allowance, gas vouchers, pay-per-call points earned for periodic equipment or expense stipends, and point-credits.

Ultimately, in whatever manner the department seeks to engage and assign the volunteer firefighters, it is vital that recruitment, retention and active participation should be encouraged through the creation of a genuine atmosphere of acceptance, inclusion and accountability of the volunteers as members on equal footing with career members in a TRUE COMBINATION FIRE DEPARTMENT.

CAREER & VOLUNTEER STAFFING/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional review and study of the consolidated fire district will require the following to be addressed and adopted by policy:

1. Define and memorialize the mission statement of the organization.
2. Establish and authorize an official table of organization and a recognized chain-of-command.
3. Develop and adopt a comprehensive written employee manual of rules and regulations.
4. Assemble and adopt practical standard operating procedures (SOPs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs) to assist personnel in safely and effectively carrying out the tasks and functions of their respective duties with quality outputs and uniformity of performance.
5. Institute supervisory practices to evaluate work performance of subordinates and to measure results of all programs, projects and operations.
6. To every extent possible and subject to the provisions of NJSA 40A: 14-81.2 Qualifications for appointment to paid positions, any applicable **TITLE 40A-Fire Districts** rules and regulations, and pre- employment screening as established and required by the authority having jurisdiction, current uniform career personnel from the existing fire districts should be offered positions to fill commensurate or otherwise available positions identified in the new table of organization.
7. The authority having jurisdiction, the fire chief and the uniform leadership should jointly:
 - Clearly define the organization's vision statement to build, nourish and sustain volunteer membership
 - develop a strategy to maintain, assign and otherwise effectively utilize the current volunteer membership township wide for the needs of the department while establishing benchmarks for recruitment, training and retention of additional volunteer firefighters
 - forge the necessary policies, procedures and programs for recruitment, training, assignment and retention of volunteer personnel which should include some provision for volunteers to be assigned on fire apparatus with career

firefighters, assignment of qualified volunteers to company officer positions, and roster staffing of volunteer members to sufficiently accommodate the number of available riding apparatus needed at any given time

- plan to provide the necessary budgetary line accounts as practicable to support sound volunteer programs and incentives such as recruitment drives, training programs, LOSAP, roster staffing and stipends for protective gear
- provide a pathway for volunteers interested in seeking a position as a career firefighter
- perhaps most importantly, consistently provide the insistent and unabashed leadership instrumental in gaining acceptance by the entire membership (career and volunteer alike) and the general public to embrace and support the premise that properly trained volunteer firefighters in good standing are entitled to the same respect, recognition and treatment as those members serving in the career sector...in this and all things, LEAD BY EXAMPLE

VIII. BUDGET, FINANCIAL AND TAX ANALYSIS

The combined 2022 budgets of the two fire districts totaled **\$4,586,947.00**. The total amount raised in taxes across the two districts in the same budget year was **\$3,639,202.00**, with an additional **\$947,745** received in total other revenues.

Future appropriations that may be reduced through the creation of one district include the following:

- **Fire Commission Salaries & Wages** – reduction of \$11,800 reducing the number of fire districts from 2 to 1 will reduce the number of Fire Commissioners from 10 to 5, thereby reducing Fire Commission salaries and wages accordingly.
- **Single Fire Official** – With the reduction of two fire prevention Bureaus, this will reduce the number of Fire Officials from 2 to 1.
- **Overtime** – Overtime may be reduced with all Career Firefighter/EMT's moving to a 24/48 hour schedule, removing the need for holiday pay/overtime and by transitioning full-time EMT's to a firefighter/EMT position and schedule
- **Operation & Maintenance** – With the reduction of vehicles in the motor pool, maintenance costs, pump and hose testing requirements, ladder testing along with insurance premiums for vehicles can be reduced considerably.
- **Technology and Computer Platforms** – With combining fire prevention inspector programs, NFIRS reporting programs, and County radios along with EMS programs the reduction of costs.
- **Insurances** – With the reduction of vehicles in the motor pool maintenance costs, testing requirements considerably. Possibly by joining JIF
- **Replacement of vehicle(s)** – With the reduction of vehicles in the motor pool maintenance costs, testing requirements considerably.

The table below details the overall increase in historical tax rates throughout the two districts proposed for dissolution. On average, tax rates have increased from **2019** through **2022**.

DISTRICT	Local 2021 Net Valuable Taxable	2021 Tax Levy	2022 Tax Levy	Tax Rate	
				2019	2020
2	\$ 2,396,276,600.00	\$ 1,905,573.00	\$ 1,927,258.00	\$ 0.066375	\$ 0.075543
3	\$ 1,449,548,000.00	\$ 1,377,597.00	\$ 1,452,945.00	\$ 0.086380	\$ 0.088690
TOTAL	\$ 3,845,824,600.00	\$ 3,283,170.00	\$ 3,380,203.00		

Tax Rate		Tax Rate	
2021		2022	
\$	0.079406	\$	0.080236
\$	0.094068	\$	0.098062
	0.085369728		0.087159071

As detailed in the table below, creation of one fire district may decrease the tax rate for one existing district from \$0.098 to \$0.094, where the opposite district may see a slight increase from \$0.081 to \$0.094. The current average assessed value of a residential home in Hanover Township is \$426,500.

Merged Tax Rate Calculation

	A	B	C	D	E (D/Total D)
DISTRICT	Local 2022 Net Value Taxable	2022 Tax Levy	Individual Tax Rate (B/A*100)	Share of combined net value taxable	Share of combined County Net value(D/Total D)
2	\$ 2,399,665,700.00	\$ 1,927,258.00	0.081	\$ 2,399,665,700.00	61.88%
3	\$ 1,478,534,200.00	\$ 1,452,945.00	0.099	\$ 1,478,534,200.00	38.12%
TOTAL	\$ 3,878,199,900.00	\$ 3,380,203.00	0.088	\$ 3,878,199,900.00	100.00%
Total w/ Savings	\$ 3,878,199,900.00			\$ 3,878,199,900.00	100.00%

F	G
Share of equalized Tax Levy (Total B*E)	Consolidated Tax Rate
\$ 2,091,526.33	0.088
\$ 1,288,676.67	0.088
\$ 3,380,203.00	0.088
\$ -	0

Source: Hanover Township Chief Financial Officer

Average Residential Property Tax Calculation

	H	I	J	K
DISTRICT	Local 2022 Residential Taxable	Residential Parcels	Average Local Residential Value (H/I)	Current Average Residential Taxes (J*C/100)
2	\$ 1,354,035,300.00	3,245	\$417,268	\$337.99
3	\$ 814,281,500.00	1,839	\$442,785	\$438.36
TOTAL	\$ 2,168,316,800.00	5,084	\$426,498	\$375.32

Source: Hanover Township Chief Financial Officer

OUTSTANDING ACCUMULATED PAY-OUTS

Uniform career personnel have contractual guarantees to be compensated for unused/accrued vacation and sick time. The following table illustrates the reported accumulated pay-outs currently owed to all uniform career personnel across the eight existing fire districts.

DISTRICT	Outstanding Accumulated pay-outs
2	\$ 190,331.24
3	\$ 112,865.49
TOTAL	\$ 303,196.73

(Eff. 1/1/2021)

(Eff. 4/13/2022)

The proposed dissolution financial plan should include resolution of these debts or transfer to the new district.

Projected reserve balances through 12/31/21 are as follows:

OUTSTANDING DEBT

Some of the eight districts carry debt balances as detailed below:

DISTRICT	Outstanding debt	
2	\$ 7,941,562.26	Bonds - \$7,548,974.31 Engine 81 - \$392,587.95
3	\$ -	
TOTAL	\$ 7,941,562.26	

RESERVE BALANCES

District	Restricted Reserve	Unrestricted Reserve
2	\$0	\$1,149,144
3	\$10,567	\$863,106
Totals:	\$10,567	\$2,012,250

IX. CONCLUSION

THIS REPORT OPENED with an introduction that was quick to identify the three central factors upon which this study would focus its attention:

1. Degree and quality of the delivery of fire protection and prevention services
2. Cost effectiveness and efficiency of administrative, operational and support services
3. Addressing the disparity of the divergent tax rates in the existing fire districts

Throughout the body of this report the emphasis has remained on these factors. In that regard, this report has achieved the following:

The current levels of fire protection and prevention services across both fire districts have been assessed and recommendations have been prescribed to establish a single command structure, assemble an effective table of organization and enhance deployment of resources.

Based on a judicious appraisal of fundamental needs for essential services to be delivered by a single-agency provider, a unilateral fire tax rate the average assessed property in each district has been proposed to address the disparity of the divergent tax rates in the existing districts.

For decades the residents of Hanover Township have received fire protection, prevention and emergency medical services from both fire districts staffed and nurtured by a cadre of noble and dedicated public servants, career and volunteer alike.

Their hard work and commitment to duty has laid a solid foundation upon which to build a new, centralized fire department to serve across all geographic and jurisdictional boundaries of the township that, if staffed, managed and led properly, will maintain its endearing connection to the history and time-honored traditions of the fire service in Hanover Township while at the same time, shall earn the coveted recognition as a forward-thinking, progressive fire department with the courage and stamina to consistently hold the best interests of the public as its highest priority.

X. APPENDIX A

Fire District revenues and appropriations in comparison with the proposed consolidation Model

HANOVER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT 2022 REVENUES

REVENUE					
	<u>Line Description</u>	<u>District 2</u>	<u>District 3</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
	Fire Alarms (Local Ordinance Penalties)	\$1,950	\$ 500.00		\$ 2,450.00
	Fire Safety Rebate (PEOSH)	\$2,197.00	\$ 2,200.00		\$ 4,397.00
	Donations	\$5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
	Interest		\$ 1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
	Rental Income	\$ 133,500.00	\$ 6,500.00		\$ 140,000.00
	EMS Income		\$ 530,000.00		\$ 530,000.00
	Local Fire Safety Registration Fees	\$19,000	\$ 32,900.00		\$ 51,900.00
	Stand-By Fire/EMS		\$ 3,000.00		\$ 3,000.00
	Fire District Tax	\$1,927,258.00	\$1,452,945.00	\$ 258,999.00	\$3,639,202.00
	Cap Bank Utilized	\$ 35,500.00	\$ 82,345.00		\$ 117,845.00
	Misc	\$ 1,353.00	\$ -		\$ 1,353.00
	Fire Bureau Penalties	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 500.00		\$ 6,000.00
	State Fire Safety Rebates (DFS)	\$ 47,000.00	\$ 32,800.00		\$ 79,800.00
	Grants		\$ -		\$ -
	Chapter 78 Employee Contributions				\$ -
	Fund Balance Utilized				\$ -
	Total	\$2,178,258.00	\$2,149,690.00	\$ 258,999.00	\$4,586,947.00

XI. APPENDIX B

Sub-Committee/Stakeholders comments and input

Identified Stakeholder Groups – Update 06/05/22

1. Cedar Knolls Fire Department - Completed
2. Whippany Fire Company – I would be happy to attend a meeting, but at this point, with the publication of the draft plan, there would be no need to meet until such time as they have read the plan
3. FMBA 109 - Completed
4. Cedar Knolls Fire Department Exempt Assoc - Completed
5. Whippany Fire Department Exempt Assoc. - I would be happy to attend a meeting, but at this point, with the publication of the draft plan, there would be no need to meet until such time as they have read the plan
6. Hanover Twp Fireman's Relief Assoc. - I would be happy to attend a meeting, but at this point, with the publication of the draft plan, there would be no need to meet until such time as they have read the plan
7. Administrative Staff – Conducted by Chief DiGiorgio and Chief Perrello
8. Line Officers – CKFD - I would be happy to attend a meeting, but at this point, with the publication of the draft plan, there would be no need to meet until such time as they have read the plan
9. Line Officers – WFD – Completed – Met with AC Shearer

With the publication of the Draft Plan, I believe that the initial stakeholder input process is complete. As the plan is distributed, it is my suggestion that the Committee meet with each stakeholder group to directly hear the reaction from the groups. This way there can be no 'misinterpretation' of suggestions and/or solutions. I would be happy to assist the Committee as they see fit.

Source: Chief James C. Davidson (ret.)

Meeting with Members of Hanover Township FMBA Local 109 – 04/06/22

I met with members of the Local 109 on the evening of April 6, 2022. Various items were discussed as identified below.

- I provided an overview of the consolidation process as presented by Mr. Braslow.
- I distributed copies of NJSA 40A:65-26 – REQUIRED INFORMATION INCLUDED IN MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION STUDY COMMISSION REPORTS and NJSA40A:14-90.2 – CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS WITHIN MUNICIPALITY
- Local 109 members provided a concern on job security/guarantee. There is a concern that members of Local 109 had heard that all Local members would have to reapply for their jobs. I responded by indicating that the Committee, at the time of the meeting, had not indicated that any jobs were be lost at the time of the merger. It was also noted that there is no way to control the actions of a new Board of Fire Commissioners post consolidation.
- There was a discussion regarding the differences in salaries and benefits and how that would be handled. I responded that, at the time of the meeting, the Committee was operating under the idea of budgeting salaries and benefits at the higher level of the 2 Districts. Again, it was noted that there is no way to control the actions of a new Board of Fire Commissioners post consolidation and that Local 109 would have to enter into negotiations with the new board of Fire Commissioners.
- There was discussion regarding the differences between the two contracts that the local has with the Fire Districts. It was noted that there is no way to control the actions of a new Board of Fire Commissioners post consolidation and that Local 109 would have to enter into negotiations with the new board of Fire Commissioners.
- There was a question as to whether it would be prudent to try and negotiate new contracts prior to a merger. I responded that this is a Locals decision to approach each District but also noted that there is no way to control the actions of a new Board of Fire Commissioners post consolidation and that Local 109 would have to enter into negotiations with the new board of Fire Commissioners.
- There was a general discussion on staffing levels as well as concerns about meeting the necessary requirements of FLSA. I indicated that when the draft report from the Committee is complete, that the Local needs to review the document and forward comments directly to the Committee.
- There was a general discussion regarding the 'quality of response' and what standard, if any, would be met. This discussion also involved some discussion

of NFPA 1710 and 1720. It was also noted that the Local would need to closely review the draft plan.

- There was a concern that post consolidation, their number of work hours would increase without an increase in compensation. It was noted that the process of consolidating is complicated, and that the consolidation plan should reflect this concern to provide guidance to the new Board of Fire Commissioners.
- There was general discussion on what a post consolidation schedule would look like. There was a question of the use of a Kelly Day and how overtime might be handled. Again, I noted that the process of consolidating is complicated, and that the consolidation plan should reflect this concern to provide guidance to the new Board of Fire Commissioners.

Meeting with Members of the Cedar Knolls Fire Department – 04/18/22

I met with members of the Cedar Knolls Fire Department on the evening of April 18, 2022. Various items were discussed as identified below.

- I provided an overview of the consolidation process as presented by Mr. Braslow.
- I distributed copies of NJSA 40A:65-26 – REQUIRED INFORMATION INCLUDED IN MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION STUDY COMMISSION REPORTS and NJSA 40A:14-90.2 – CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS WITHIN MUNICIPALITY
- There was a general question on the time frame and makeup of the election of new commissioners. I indicated that it was my understanding that the process would follow title 40A.
- There was a question regarding the process by which a projected budget would be generated. I indicated that both Boards' finances were going to be reviewed and that both Boards utilized the same accounting firm for their budget preparation and auditing and that firm would be involved in the draft budget process.
- There was a question on potential effect on the ISO rating. I indicated that in all probability, once a new District is formed, then a new ISO review would probably occur.
- There was a question on T33 replacement and general capital planning. I indicated that the Committee was in agreement that both Districts would continue to operate as if a consolidation would not occur. It was noted that both Districts need to continue to plan and budget for future years.

- There was a question on the various benefits both volunteer agencies receive from the Districts and what would carry over. I indicated that, at the time of the meeting, that the plan was to assume that all current benefits would carry over in the consolidated Fire District and that the new Board of Fire Commissioners would then decide/negotiate with both the Whippany and Cedar Knolls volunteers.
- It was noted that Whippany Fire Company has a contract with their Fire District and Cedar Knolls Fire Department does not. I agreed with that statement.

Meeting with Members of the Cedar Knolls Exempt Association – 04/20/22

I met with members of the Cedar Knolls Exempt Association on the evening of April 20, 2022. Various items were discussed as identified below.

- I provided an overview of the consolidation process as presented by Mr. Braslow.
- I distributed copies of NJSA 40A:65-26 – REQUIRED INFORMATION INCLUDED IN MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION STUDY COMMISSION REPORTS and NJSA40A:14-90.2 – CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS WITHIN MUNICIPALITY
- It was noted by the members present, that the Cedar Knolls Exempt Association owns part of the parking lot that is utilized by Fire District #3. In addition, there is a contract between the Fire District and the Exempt Association. I indicated that the Committee is aware of this contract and that, at the time of the meeting, the plan was for that contract to carry over to the new consolidated Fire District and that the Exempt Association would renegotiate a contract with the new Board, post-consolidation.

Meeting with Whippany Fire Department Assistant Chief Derrick Shearer – 05/28/22

I met with Assistant Chief Derrick Shearer on May 28, 2022. Various items were discussed as identified below.

- I distributed copies of NJSA 40A:65-26 – REQUIRED INFORMATION INCLUDED IN MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION STUDY COMMISSION REPORTS and NJSA40A:14-90.2 – CONSOLIDATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS WITHIN MUNICIPALITY
- There was a general discussion on the various management challenges that a consolidated fire district could create. I indicated that many of these challenges

have been discussed by the Committee and should be reflected in the consolidation plan. I also indicated that should he see something not addressed to bring it to the Committees attention.

- There was a general discussion on the process of becoming a volunteer within the two Fire Districts as well as the process of becoming a volunteer officer. It was noted that each Fire District has very different procedures. I indicated that, at the time of the meeting, it was proposed that all processes for becoming a volunteer and/or officer would continue into a consolidated Fire District. I also indicated that, at the time of the meeting, all current volunteer officer would retain their positions into the consolidated Fire District. It was also noted that there is no way to control the actions of a new Board of Fire Commissioners post consolidation.