



Town of Falmouth

Fire-EMS Department

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TO: Nathan Poore, Town Manager
FROM: Howard Rice, Jr., Fire Chief
DATE: 03/16/09
RE: Responses to Town Council Questions

Below are responses to the questions posed by the Town Council at the Public Hearing held on 3/09/09.

1.) What are the response times from all stations?

<i>FROM</i>	<i>TO</i>	<i>DISTANCE (over the road)</i>	<i>RESPONSE TIME (flow of traffic)</i>
Portland Ladder 4 (Allen Ave)	Station 3 (Allen Ave)	1.26 miles	2 minutes
Falmouth Central (Bucknam Rd)	Station 3 (Allen Ave)	2.49 miles	5 minutes
Falmouth Station 4 (Winn Rd)	Station 3 (Allen Ave)	3.27 miles	6 minutes
Portland Engine 11 (Ocean Ave)	Station 3 (Allen Ave)	2.68 miles	6 minutes
Falmouth Station 1 (Foreside Rd)	Station 3 (Allen Ave)	4.59 miles	9 minutes

2.) Do we have an issue working with Union firefighters?

Falmouth Fire-EMS currently employs ten members of the International Association of Firefighters who are active members. The majority of our per diem Firefighter/Paramedics are fulltime employees of larger fire departments who work hand-in-hand with our membership daily. This past year we have worked with Portland firefighters and paramedics at various calls in Falmouth, including the Oil Spill on the Presumpscot River Bridge and the fire on Foreside Road with no issues at all. Our crews have also worked at large incidents in Westbrook and Windham alongside multiple career Union personnel with no issues. Our priorities on scene are the same: protect life and property.

3.) Are there any known budget problems in Portland that would affect Ladder 4 Station?

We are not aware of any budget issues in Portland relating to Ladder 4 or Engine 11 stations. We have been told that the current budget proposal does not include closing fire stations.

4.) What is our current relationship with Portland?

We work on a mutual aid basis with the City of Portland. Our ambulances and their ambulances back each other up periodically as needed. Falmouth currently sends an ambulance and Tank 4 automatically to the Portland Jetport for plane in-flight emergencies (example: landing gear issues, flap issues, smoke in plane, etc.). In 2008, Falmouth responded to 12 automatic calls to the Jetport. Falmouth also provides 2 Engines and 1 Ambulance to Portland to cover 2 Portland Stations when Portland goes to a 3rd Alarm fire incident. Falmouth responded to Portland twice in 2008 for 3rd Alarm station coverage, and responded to 3 incidents in Portland while providing the coverage. Falmouth also responded direct to 1 scene in Portland in 2008 with the Tower, while Portland's aerials were busy on other incidents.

Portland currently comes to Falmouth when Falmouth has multi-alarm fires in certain areas of town. In 2008 Portland responded to Falmouth twice to the scene of incidents (fire on Foreside Road and Fuel Spill on Allen Avenue), and once for station coverage when multiple Falmouth units were at a fire for an extended period in Cumberland.

5.) What are the response times for the past few years to calls in Pleasant Hill?

See attached sheet. Average response for the first Falmouth apparatus to arrive at calls in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood over the past two years is 8 minutes.

6.) What are the projections for response times in the future to calls in Pleasant Hill?

See attached sheet. Projected response times for the first apparatus to arrive at calls in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood given the same locations as the past two years is 8 minutes. To calculate the estimated response times the route was travelled multiple times and then added to an estimated time for the apparatus to respond. Given the addition of a Firefighter/Paramedic at night at Central, Engine 2 was estimated to respond in 3 minutes. Portland Ladder 4 was estimated to respond in 2 minutes, since the station is staffed with an entire crew.

7.) What are the distances to the Fire Stations for insurance purposes?

No residents in the Pleasant Hill section of Falmouth will be more than 5 miles away from Central Station on Bucknam Road. Along with the locations of fire hydrants, many insurance companies ask about the distances from the closest fire station and average number of staff. We field many calls from insurance companies asking for information about specific addresses.

8.) What are the minimum costs of re-using the building for public purposes?

We estimate that approximately \$100,000 would be needed to use the building for any purpose, including public assembly, in the future. This includes removing the trees, replacing the septic system, replacing a bathroom with an ADA compliant one, adding ADA accessibility, replacing the heating system, windows, and upgrading the fire alarm system.

If we were to use the building as a fire station, we would need to add costs for ventilation system to remove vehicle exhaust from the building, provide adequate separation of the garage area from the rest of the building, and install a drain in the floor.

9.) What are the costs associated with closing the building?

The costs associated with closing the building would depend on what the use of the building would be. If it were used as a cold storage, certain upgrades may need to be made. To simply close the building, the heating system could be turned off and plumbing drained.

10.) If Portland cuts back on stations or personnel, what would the effect be on Falmouth?

If any of our mutual aid neighbors cut back on stations or staff, responses to Falmouth may change. Mutual aid agreements and plans allow departments to share resources in times of need. Assets are often 'moved up' or staged for large emergencies. This ensures coverage to other areas as well as provides extra resources if they are needed on scene. Any reductions in staffing or stations would mean different companies would need to respond or 'move up'.

11.) Do we respond to I-295 and I-95?

Falmouth Fire-EMS covers approximately 4 miles northbound and southbound on I-295, 5 miles of the Maine Turnpike (I-95) northbound and southbound, and the entire Turnpike Spur (3 miles). Engine 2 is the primary responder for I-295 and the westbound lane of the Spur with Engine 4 responding to the Maine Turnpike and the eastbound lane of the Spur.

Falmouth Fire-EMS responded 23 times to I-95 (12-Fire and 11-EMS) and 35 times to I-295 (14-Fire and 21-EMS) in 2008. Calls to the Turnpike Spur are included in the I-95 totals. The incidents range from vehicle fires, motor vehicle crashes, EMS emergencies, brush fires, and public assists. The majority of incidents are minor motor vehicle crashes that are cleared up in less than ½ hour. When multiple units are committed on either highway, an engine company is called in to cover Central Station.

12.) How do we keep the 'sense of community'?

Falmouth Fire-EMS has participated in several events over the past 2 years to promote the 'sense of community'. We have taken an active role in presenting fire safety during the annual Fire Prevention Week by visiting daycares and preschools with our personnel. We have sent numerous crews along with fire apparatus and ambulances to special events like Easter Egg Hunts, Open Houses, Santa Claus visits, Halloween parties, and school events such as the 4th grade end of the year celebration. Our crews have volunteered in the high school EMS class to help teach EMS, but also to promote Falmouth Fire-EMS and to actively seek young responders who may someday fill our ranks. We have spoken at the Lunt School and given tours to girl scouts, cub scouts, and other children's groups at the fire stations.

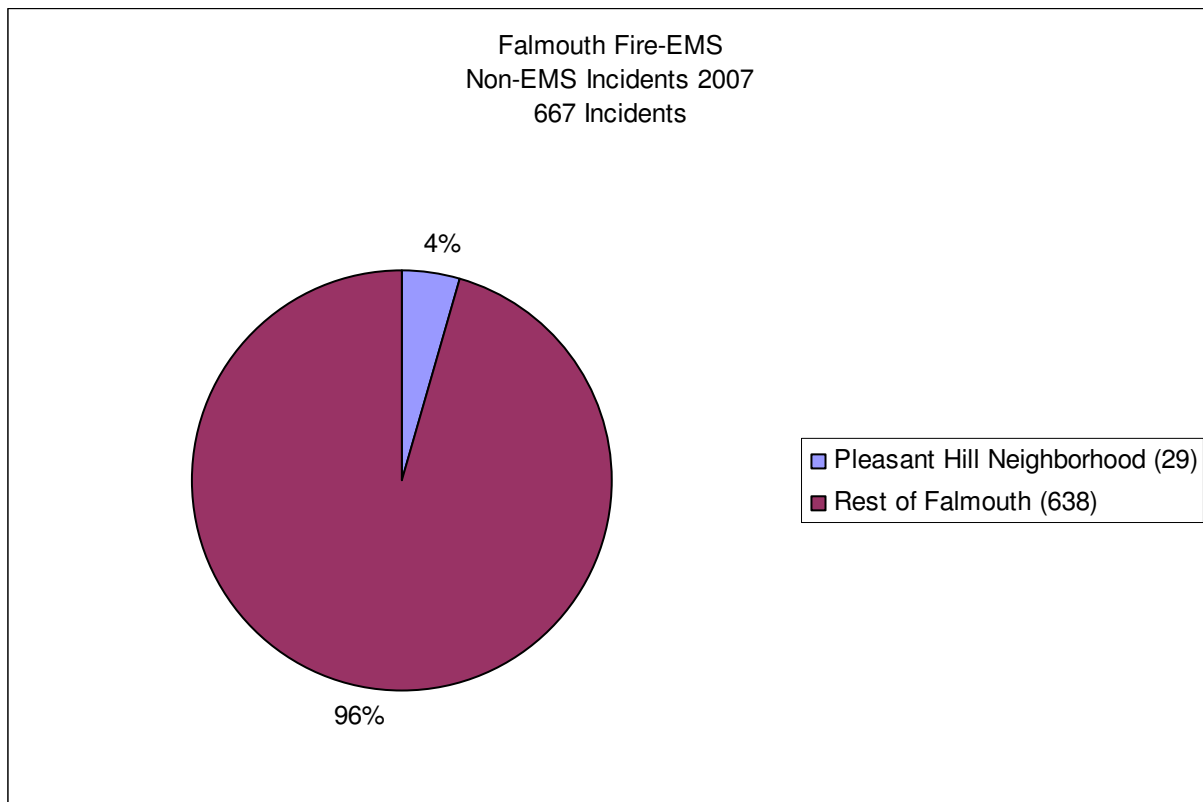
Since the renovations to Central Station were completed we have hosted various group meetings in our new training room. By making the room available during business hours, we have hosted many groups such as the girl scouts, cub scouts, and the weekly Yoga class through Community Programs.

Our crews volunteer for covering soccer games, football games, cross county meets, and have provided escorts to numerous State Champion Athletic and Interscholastic Teams (including the math team and the high school band). The sense of community runs deep through the membership of the Fire-EMS Department and is evident by the commitment of our members to these non-Fire and non-EMS tasks.

Over the past 2 years we have increased our attendance dramatically on Monday evening training nights and have even started Tuesday morning training for people who work on Monday nights. We have added a few nights throughout the year to focus on teamwork and camaraderie by playing softball, having barbeques, and other fun nights. At a recent meeting to recap the year 2008 we provided raffles with door prizes, many of which were donated by the community. By doing this we have focused on bringing fun trainings and events to our membership. Our members are not paid for their training. They attend because they want to. Scheduling diverse, fun activities, not only keeps everyone smiling, but also improves our attitudes and our teamwork. An EMT or Firefighter needs over 120 hours of training to provide patient care or advance a fire hose line into a burning building. A cross-trained member needs over 240 hours to do both. Attendance at weekly training is the key to our survival. A recent survey of our membership found that 96% of our members want to attend Monday night trainings. The same survey found that 98% of all members responded that their work is satisfying to them. This is a key indication of the desire to provide the service.

13.) What does the Pie Chart look like for 2007 incidents in Pleasant Hill?

The chart below includes all calls for the Patriots Day Storm (including 17 in Pleasant Hill Road area).



14.) Is there an issue with the railroads?

The railroad crossing in West Falmouth by Leighton Road is managed by the Springfield terminal. A conversation with them found the following:

- a. The schedule of trains changes all of the time
- b. In a 24-hr period there may be 6 trains (3 each way)
- c. The train speed at the Falmouth Rd/Leighton Road crossing is 10 mph due to a light problem. A long train could take as much as 10 to 15 minutes to cross.
- d. If the Springfield Terminal is contacted they can immediately locate and hold up a train to avoid an intersection issue.
- e. They do not have any information on AMTRAK service at this time, however it was noted that AMTRAK trains are not nearly as long as a freight train and will travel at a higher speed, thus reducing the amount of time at the crossing.

The railroad crossing on Bucknam Road is managed by the St. Lawrence. We have spoken with the dispatcher who was not able to release any information on trains and schedules to us. Repeated messages to the supervisor have not been returned.

15.) If finances were not a problem, would we close Station 3?

Based on the facts and figures of the past responses of Station 3 and the entire Fire-EMS Department, we can close Station 3 without adverse effects on the community. We can do this by providing a different approach to responding to emergencies. Adding a Firefighter/Paramedic at night will staff Central Station with a cross-trained Firefighter/Paramedic at all times. This Firefighter/Paramedic, combined with other staff (fulltime and call/volunteer during the week, call/volunteer on nights and weekends), plus the automatic response of Portland's staffed Allen Avenue Station only 1.26 miles from Station 3, will increase the level of service that we currently provide to the Pleasant Hill community while at the same time providing a better level of service for the entire community. Residents in areas outside of Pleasant Hill will benefit greatly by having the 24-hour coverage of the cross-trained Firefighter/Paramedic at Central Station.

If you need more information on these questions, or any others, please let me know. Thanks.

**Falmouth Fire-EMS
Pleasant Hill Neighborhood Non-EMS Calls 2007-08**

Address	Description	Time of Call	First Unit		Proposed	
			Engine	Time	Engine	Time
Oakland Street	Fire alarm - burnt food	1809	E3	4	E2	6
Sherwood Drive	Power line down	0855	E3	4	E2	8
Pine Road	Tree limb on wires	1758	E3	9	E2	7
Stapleford Drive	Fire alarm	1742	E3	9	E2	9
Allen Avenue Ext	Small brush pile smoldering	0001	E3	5	E2	8
Jameson Drive	Structure Fire	1907	E3, E2, E4	13	L4	4
Lower Falls Road	Smoldering mulch	2118	E3	6	E2	9
Pleasant Hill Road	Smoke in house-furnace problem	1648	E4	10	L4	5
Carriage Road	Smoldering mulch	1924	E3	6	E2	9
Pleasant Hill Road	Fire alarm - faulty detector	1532	E2	12	E2	9
Ledgewood Drive	Extinguish unpermitted burn	1613	E3	7	E2	11
Northledge Terrace	Smell of propane - nothing found	2016	E3	10	L4	4
Allen Avenue Ext	CO alarm - nothing found	1847	E3	5	E2	8
Pleasant Hill Road	Chimney fire	1946	E3	8	E2	9
Middle Road	Wood pile on fire	2328	E3	10	E2	9
Pleasant Hill Road	Wire sparking	2013	E3	6	E2	9
Aster Lane	Fire alarm - alarm malfunction	2106	E3	9	E2	10
Middle Road	Furnace malfunction	0735	E2	10	E2	8
Allen Avenue Ext	CO detector - nothing found	1839	E3	6	E2	8
Payeur Circle	Alarm sounding - burgular, not fire	0414	E3	11	E2	10
Heather Lane	Wires down	0648	E3	13	E2	6
Middle Road	Wires down	1608	E3	10	E2	7
Clifton Road	Wires arcing	1940	E3	8	E2	7
Country Lane	Propane leak - nothing found	1538	A2	8	L4	4
			Average	8.29	Average	7.67