

MTFR STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 4.0 Strengthen MTFR's Fiscal Health

Objective 4.1 Seek an increase to our operating levy to adequately fund operations and needed capital improvements

Maintaining financial sustainability is a critical component to this plan. A fiscally responsible department with secure funding to cover its needs is a benefit to the communities we serve. For years, MTFR has operated within its operating budget and has not been plagued by the cost overruns and deficits that seem commonplace in government. There are many challenges facing us including staffing, apparatus replacement, facility issues and more. Increasing our operating levy is necessary to fund the items detailed within this plan, both operational and capital. The rollback of our operating levy in 2000 from 4.6 to 3.8 mills severely hampered our ability to plan and fund major needed improvements. This proposed increase, from 3.8 to 4.2 mills will put us in a position to continue the tradition of excellence at MTFR and provide our staff with the equipment they need. We realize that the Yellow Springs/Miami Township area carries a large tax burden and will only ask for exactly what we need.

Objective 4.2 Develop financial strategies to replace equipment as it becomes obsolete or too expensive to repair.

By adopting current best practices from the private sector, we will be able to adequately fix value on equipment and plan for its retirement through reliable depreciation schedules. To accomplish this, we will:

- **Train department administrators in current accounting principles.** This can be accomplished through self-study, seminars and training courses.
- **Establish equipment depreciation schedules.** This will allow us to better budget and plan for replacement.

Timeframe and Cost

Both of the actions items above can be accomplished within the first two years of the plan. Training administrative staff is a low cost item that can be accomplished within the operating budget. Establishing a depreciation system will take some work to integrate with the township's accounting practices.

Objective 4.3 Develop financial strategies to assist in the recruitment and retention of paid and volunteer members.

Recruiting and retaining dedicated and qualified members is a complex activity that requires time and funding. To assist in this process, we will:

- **Investigate and develop "direct impact" benefits for active volunteers.** In some areas of the country, volunteer firefighters and EMTs receive "direct impact" benefits for their service to the community. These include partial

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property tax abatements, rent discounts, waiver of municipal fees, health and life insurance and pension programs. These programs can go a long way to making a volunteer feel appreciated and strengthening retention efforts.

Timeframe and Cost

Accomplishing this action item will require research into applicable regulations in Ohio. We will also have to work closely with village, township, county and state officials and regulatory bodies to determine what can be done. This should be in place within three years.

Objective 4.4 Investigate appropriate fiscal strategies to address critical facility needs.

Renovating the current Yellow Springs fire station or building a new one will be expensive projects. It is important to find the most cost effective method to pay for this type of project. We will investigate allowable fiscal strategies to enable us to meet our facility needs, whether through a special one-time levy, a bond issue, or through financing that meets the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code.

Timeframe and Cost

This objective can be accomplished with department personnel and at little to no additional costs. This is scheduled to be completed within FY 2005.

Objective 4.5 Develop additional revenue streams to supplement levy funds in core areas such as training.

MTFR has developed a reputation as a provider of quality training services. For years, other fire departments and EMS agencies have sent their members to us for basic EMT, intermediate EMT, firefighter 1 and firefighter 2 training. While there is no way to meet all of our needs in this manner, this type of fee-for-service item allows us to supplement levy funds and in some cases, make operations self-sufficient. To continue and further this, we will:

- **Continue operations as an AHA Community Training Center.** This component of our services, started in 2004, is completely self-sufficient and provides an important service to the community.
- **Expand the amount of training available to outside providers.** Through the continued provision to outside providers of state certification courses, in addition to EMS continuing education, we can provide revenue to offset our training costs. By drawing on the wide and varied fields of expertise available to us within our membership, we can provide relevant training to a large and willing audience.
- **Utilize permit and plan review fees to offset the costs of the fire prevention inspection program.** Permit and plan review fees are standard within the fire service to help offset the costs of operating a prevention program. In many cases,

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these fees are required under the Ohio Fire Code. By structuring a reasonable fee schedule, we can offset the costs of an expanded prevention program.

Timeframe and Cost

The action items above are all in progress. The AHA programs are completely self-sufficient through user fees. Training is currently provided to outside agencies; expanding the menu of courses and seminars available will take two years to accomplish. Fees are charged for permits and plan reviews currently; by expanding the fire prevention inspection program, planned for FY 2005, we will be able to cover our costs.

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