

MTFR STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 6.0 Enhance Emergency Operations and Preparedness

Objective 6.1 Enhance and strengthen the Department's advanced life support (ALS) capabilities

The provision of ALS (paramedic) service to the community is critical to operating an effective emergency medical program. Paramedics possess the highest level of training in pre-hospital care and expand upon the care provided by basic and intermediate emergency medical technicians. Paramedics perform advanced trauma and airway management skills, interpret and respond to EKG rhythm changes, administer over 20 life-saving medications and provide intravenous therapy. Members who chose to become paramedics go through over one year of intense training, including hundreds of hours of in-hospital clinical training. As the amount of training required increases, it is difficult to find volunteers willing to undergo the training and continuing education requirements (80+ hours every two years; more than a nurse or a physician). Under a contract with our medical directors, we are required to provide this service around the clock. To continue to provide this vital service, we must:

- **Develop a system of financial incentives to make becoming a paramedic more attractive.** Communities nationwide face this dilemma, and have turned to financial incentives to “sweeten the pot” for volunteers to aid them in their decision to seek the training. Some of these incentives include on-call pay and hourly pay per call.
- **Consider hiring part-time personnel to cover paramedic shifts.** Currently, weekday paramedic coverage is provided by our full-time staff. Weeknights and weekends are covered by available volunteers supplemented by the full-time staff (who are not paid for this coverage). Until more volunteers are trained as paramedics, supplemental staffing must be considered.
- **Enhance the use of advanced technology to provide pre-hospital care.** We need to be in position to respond to changes and advances in technology as they affect patient care. We have always been at the forefront of technology utilization, and will continue to do so.

Timeframe and Cost

These issues are of vital importance and must receive immediate attention. Both action items need to be addressed during FY 2005. However, as it takes over a year to train one paramedic, this facet of the plan will stretch over several years. Developing financial incentives, particularly a paid-on-call program, are detailed in section 1 of this plan. Detailed research will be needed to evaluate options and determine which are the most cost effective.

Technology upgrades are planned as part of the budget for FY 2005, where we will be moving from paper-based report to laptop computers. Future upgrades include purchasing a second LifePak 12 electrocardiogram/defibrillator for the second medic unit.

Objective 6.2 Enhance the capabilities of the rope rescue team

Fire departments throughout the Miami Valley are beginning to embrace the idea of regionalization in certain operational areas. Fire departments are investigating regional technical rescue teams, realizing that it is neither cost effective nor efficient to have every fire department equip and prepare for every possible occurrence. Our area of specialization is rope rescue. MTFR has had a rope rescue team for over twenty years and will be a lead agency under the regionalization plan. To work within this new paradigm, our team must evolve from a single-agency entity to one that accepts members from throughout Greene and Clark counties. To facilitate this, we will:

- **Increase the number of Operations-level rope rescue personnel.** This will be accomplished by increasing the number of certification courses taught as well as by integrating Operations-level rope training into the firefighter 1 course.
- **Continue to build confidence and competence through the current training program.** The rope rescue team trains monthly on techniques, basic skills, and scenarios. By strengthening our commitment to training, as well as building a strong organizational structure, we will allow our team to grow into its new role.

Timeframe and Cost

We have already begun to increase the number of trained personnel by integrating the rope course into firefighter 1. We will continue to do this in effort to support this team. Our on-going training program is fully supported by department administration as is the new organizational structure. These items have little to no impact on the budget.

Objective 6.3 Streamline fire scene operations.

Fire scene operations can be dangerous, especially in a department with such a low occurrence of actual fires. While our firefighters are well trained, nothing can take the place of actual fire experience. However, by having proactive and safe policies and procedures that work to make the job easier, we can make fire scene operations safer. By streamlining our operations and upgrading our communications system we can accomplish this. To make this happen, we will:

- **Reorganize fire company fundamental operations.** Currently, the department operates three engine companies, in part to meet insurance requirements placed on the department by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). ISO grades a community's fire protection on a 1 to 10 scale, with one representing the best available fire protection. Due to our size, we are required to maintain two engine companies and one reserve engine company. We are also required to maintain a ladder company (fire truck with an aerial ladder), which we do not do. We propose to move from three engines to two engines and one "quint". Because of the dual role of the "quint", this will allow us to receive credit for two engines, a

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reserve engine, and a ladder truck. Having a “quint” will also allow our firefighters to operate more efficiently and safely on fire scenes.

- **Provide on-going training in fire company roles & responsibilities.** By having designated roles and responsibilities for each responding company, as well as for each seating position on that company, we can greatly enhance our operational efficiency. This translates into faster deployment times on scene.
- **Complete move to Greene County 800 MHz radio system.** The department has already begun the transition from our current VHF radio system to the Greene County 800 MHz trunked radio system. This was made possible due to a grant that the county Emergency Management Agency received. This grant funded the purchase of 23 radios for us. However, several more are needed to fully complete the move.

Timeframe and Cost

The move from three engines to two engines and a quint will take place over the ten year planning period. The cost involved is substantial due to the purchase of a quint. The quint is estimated to cost between \$350,000 and \$500,000. Providing on-going training is a continual process that is being phased in during FY 2005, at little to no additional cost. Completing the move to the County radio system will cost approximately \$36,000, spread over the first three years of the plan. Funding for this project will be accomplished through Federal Homeland Security grants as well as through our operating budget.

Objective 6.4 Enhance the first response capabilities from the Clifton Station

Providing the residents of the Village of Clifton and the eastern portion of the township with a rapid response is an important facet of this plan. To enhance our services to this segment of the district, we will:

- **Replace ambulance 835 with a multi-role first responder vehicle.** As detailed in the apparatus section, ambulance 835 is not reliable. We plan to replace it with a dedicated first response vehicle that would be equipped with medical supplies, an AED and other equipment. This vehicle would be used by Clifton area volunteers to respond to calls in Clifton and the eastern side of the township. This would allow for care to be started rapidly while awaiting the arrival of apparatus from Yellow Springs.
- **Increase recruiting efforts.** It is crucial to the success of the department to draw volunteers from throughout the township. We will begin efforts targeted at Clifton-area residents to increase the number of recruits we have.

Timeframe and Cost

Replacing ambulance 835 with a first responder vehicle will cost approximately \$22,000 and can be offset by the sale of 835, tanker 812 and engine 821. This is planned for FY 2006. Increasing recruiting efforts will begin this year and be an ongoing effort. This is

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tied to our overall recruiting and advertising plans as detailed in Community Relations and Personnel.

Objective 6.5 Enhance the health, safety and wellness of members.

The health, safety and wellness of our members are guiding forces behind this plan. A healthy and safe workforce is beneficial in many ways. Over the past few years, we have taken significant steps towards improving our health and safety. These steps include the implementation of a mandatory fitness program as well as the introduction of a tobacco-free workplace policy that forbids tobacco use at any time during membership. Safety is also addressed by training and equipment that is responsive to member needs. To continue to enhance our health and safety, we will:

- **Develop thorough and formalized motor pump operator (MPO) initial and refresher training programs.** Our MPOs currently undergo significant training in order to become certified to drive. However, there is much room for improvement and a need for standardization. Through the development of a standardized curriculum, we will address this need.
- **Develop performance standards to address the training needs of firefighters, EMTs and officers.** Performance standards allow our people to gauge their knowledge and skills, and determine areas for improvement. This provides for greater safety.
- **Expand the fitness program.** Currently, our fitness program only applies to active firefighters. This needs to be expanded to our entire staff with age and job appropriate standards. In addition, it is important to implement entry-level fitness and physical performance standards.
- **Train additional personnel as fitness trainers.** Currently, two members have received training and certification as fitness trainers. More are needed to be able to respond to member needs.
- **Acquire flashover simulator.** Flashovers occur when a room completely ignites into fire. This potentially fatal phenomenon is occurring more frequently due to building construction and interior design factors. Training firefighters to recognize the signs of flashover before they occur is vitally important. A flashover simulator allows firefighters to learn and recognize these signs.

Timeframe and Cost

The first three action items are already underway. These items are being addressed by department personnel at little to no additional cost. Training additional fitness trainers is scheduled to occur this year at a cost of \$800, which is funded in our operating budget. The acquisition of a flashover simulator is a high cost item, with a cost of approximately \$80,000 for a mobile unit. A mobile unit would allow us to share with other agencies, potentially generating revenue for upkeep. We plan to fund this purchase through a combination of private and Federal grants.

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Objective 6.6 Strengthen management and organizational development.

Developing a well-trained core of officers and senior personnel is critical to maintaining safe and effective operations. As the role of a fire department member constantly expands, new training and supervisory challenges constantly await. To address this, we will:

- **Increase the managerial capabilities of officer and senior personnel.** The FY 2005 budget contains funding for officer training for the first time. It is crucial to provide our officers and senior personnel with opportunities for leadership and operational training through seminars and conferences.
- **Implement officer development program.** Traditionally, members have been promoted to officer positions without any formal training. To address this, we will begin offering the Fire Officer 1 course to interested members to prepare them for the transition to officer.
- **Develop partnerships with large fire departments to facilitate experiential learning.** By partnering with large departments (Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, etc.) our supervisory personnel will have to opportunity gain valuable tactical and strategic experience through ride along programs.
- **Develop an incident command training center.** We have long held the belief that all members should be trained in the vital functions of incident command. Having a dedicated facility in which to train will provide our members with an outstanding knowledge base in this field.

Timeframe and Cost

The first two action items are already underway. We have budgeted for office training, and will continue to do so. Additionally, planning is underway for our first Fire Officer 1 course in conjunction with the Greene County Career Center. Developing partnerships with larger agencies will cost approximately \$3,000 per year (mostly in travel reimbursements), but that program is discussed under the personnel section of this plan. The development of an incident command training center is an exciting prospect. This type of training is a key component to safe and efficient operations, however very few facilities exist to facilitate it. We plan to work with local educational institutions and pursue Federal grants to make this training center a reality. We plan to have this in operation within six years.

Objective 6.7 Expand the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

These community-based teams are designed to operate in support of emergency responders during disasters and other large-scale events. Our team is composed of eight community members who received sixteen hours of training through a FEMA sponsored course. In the event of a disaster, this number of team members would most likely be inadequate. To address this, we will:

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- **Train additional team members.** Several department members are CERT trainers, and the training materials are provided through the county at no cost. Expanding CERT training throughout the community and into industrial and educational settings would provide for a potent force to assist with disaster mitigation and other events.
- **Develop regular CERT training.** Our CERT trains with other county teams on a semi-regular basis. However, it is crucial for our team to train with the department. We will appoint a department CERT coordinator to facilitate this.

Timeframe and Cost

The above action items are all no to low cost and will be implemented during the first year of the plan.