

# PLYMPTON

*Massachusetts*



## **FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT**



# MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC. (MRI)

## Engaged to:

- Development of an emergency medical services (EMS) cost/revenue projection for a period of five years.
- Evaluation of the level of service (specifically related to response times) currently provided to the community and compare/contrast that to the level of service that would be provided if the service configuration model was altered.
- Development of a series of questions that the Town of Plympton should ask the Town of Halifax relative to potential collaboration and shared services related to the provision of fire and EMS services. These questions include consideration of the concept of having the Town of Halifax deliver some emergency services to the Town of Plympton at night.

# MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC. (MRI)

## Engaged to:

- An analysis of, and recommendations relative to, the potential privatization of EMS services by the Town of Plympton.
- A thorough review of the current fire and EMS services provided to the Town of Plympton, with an analysis of whether the current system is meeting the needs of the community, along with recommendations for improvement.
- An evaluation of current efforts by the Plympton Fire Department regarding the recruitment and retention for on-call and volunteer personnel, and recommendation(s) on strategies to increase the number of active members of the call/volunteer force.



## **Our Goal:**

***To create a report that becomes a useful guide and a resource that shapes a vision for the success of the organization as it approaches the challenges and transitions of the future.***

# METHODOLOGY

- Interviews with numerous stakeholders.
- Review of data and documents.
- Analyzing data.
- Evaluating on-site operations, facilities, and resources.
- Developed recommendations for improvement.
- Started investigating the feasibility of shared services.

# PLYMPTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

- **Dedicated and passionate core group of members.**
- **Organization is currently in crises.**
- **Majority of stakeholders perceive a lack of direction.**
- **Lack of leadership has led to a lack of focus, direction, and common vision.**



# MRI'S KEY AREAS OF CONCERN

- Number of call firefighters is very limited and few of them actually live in Plympton.
- Only slightly over half of the department's personnel possess basic Firefighter I/II certification.
- Rarely achieves desired staffing levels.
- Station that no longer meets the current...and future...needs of the department.
- Rising costs of continuing to provide ALS service.



# LIMITED NUMBER OF ACTIVE CALL PERSONNEL

- **General problem across US.**
- **Compounded by the fact that few actually live in Plympton.**
- **Can impact all facets of department operations.**
- **No active call personnel recruitment and retention program.**
- **More than 50 on call personnel terminated over past 4 years.**

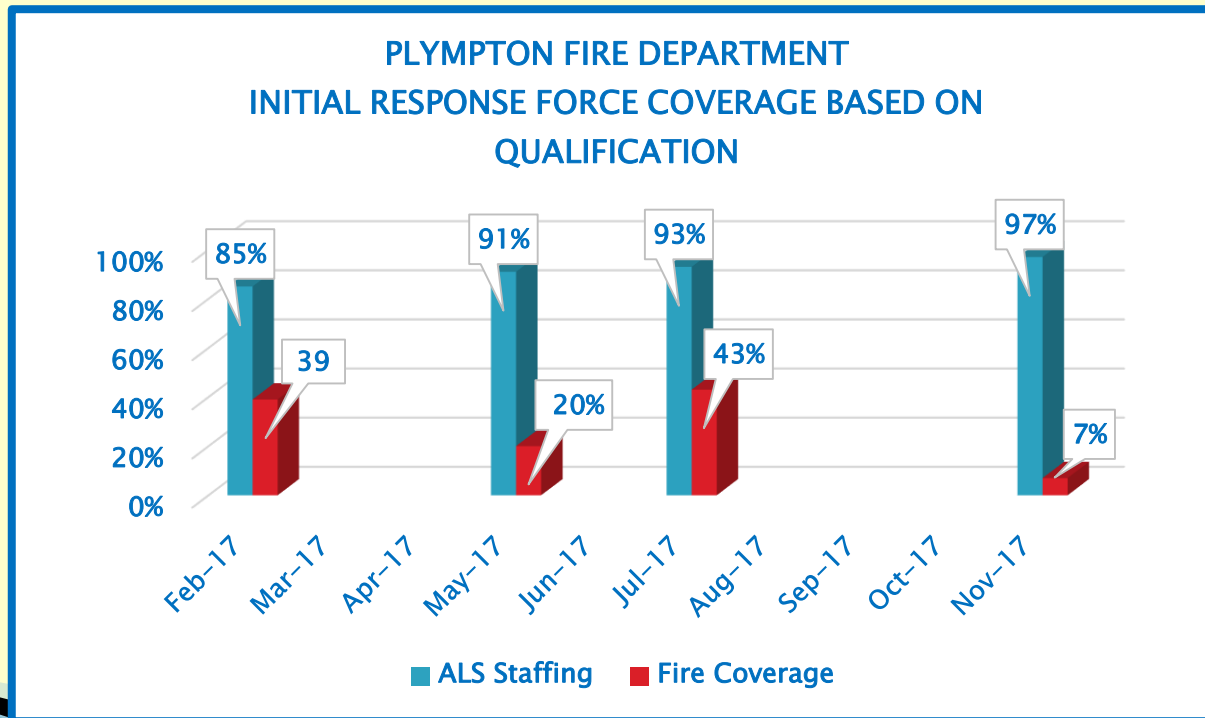


# LACK OF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

- **Just 18 of 35 personnel on the 2017 roster had documented Firefighter I/II training or certification.**
- **Situation calls into question the department's overall operational readiness, provides the town with a false sense of security, and may open the town up to increased liability.**

# RARELY ACHIEVE DESIRED STAFFING LEVELS

- Department rarely achieves stated goal of providing a two person cross trained Initial Response Force (IRF) for both EMS and fire 24/7.



## **STATION THAT NO LONGER MEETS THE CURRENT... AND FUTURE...NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT.**

- **Station does not comply with the recommendations of a number of NFPA standards for modern day fire and EMS facilities.**
- **Not conducive to effective operations.**
- **Station is crowded with limited storage.**
- **Inadequate crew quarters in a separate facility.**
- **No vehicle exhaust system.**



# STATION THAT NO LONGER MEETS THE CURRENT... AND FUTURE...NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT.



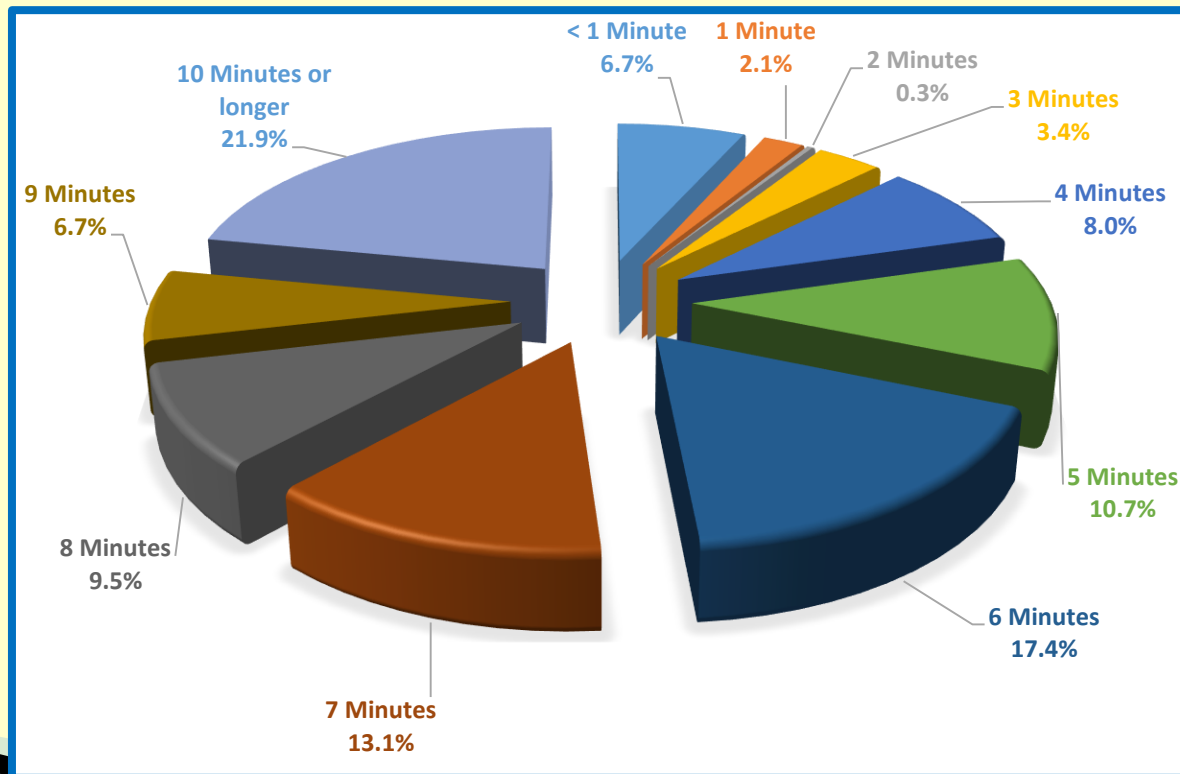
# **RISING COSTS OF PROVIDING ALS LEVEL EMS SERVICES.**

- **Year-to-year cost increases associated with EMS operations, particularly staffing, are not sustainable in town budget and they need to be further offset by ambulance revenues.**
- **Several changes to insurance payments and Medicare reimbursements are being considered at both the national and state levels.**
- **Ambulance fund could become insolvent in about FY 2023.**



# EMS RESPONSE TIMES

- National standard of care for stroke and cardiac protocols is to have a unit on location within 6 minutes including call processing and turnout time.





# Key Recommendations

*Many risks are also opportunities. This report can be an idle source of conversation or a means to engage the organization to plan for a vibrant future.*



# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



- Develop formal...and ongoing.. call personnel recruitment and retention program.
- Seek SAFER grant to fund efforts.
- Focus effort on residents of Plympton.
- Need to provide tangible benefits.

# TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

- **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN FOR PROVIDING AND REQUIRING, THAT ALL PERSONNEL, BOTH CAREER AND CALL, ATTEND, AND SUCCESSFULLY, COMPLETE A STATE-SPONSORED TRAINING PROGRAM THAT WILL RESULT IN THEIR ACHIEVING BASIC FIREFIGHTER I/II CERTIFICATION.**
- **Implement a formal standard, that specifies a minimum number of hours of training personnel must complete in order to remain active. Seventy-two hours per year, so an average of six hours per month would be reasonable.**
- **Implement periodic basic skills proficiency evaluations for ALL active personnel.**



# RESPONSE TIMES

- Plympton should adopt benchmarks to have the first unit responding to emergency incidents within one minute of dispatch (career/staffed station) and have the first unit on scene within eight minutes after responding, to all types of calls, 90% of the time.
- In areas within 2 miles of the fire station, a response time of four minutes or less should be the goal, particularly for life threatening medical emergencies.



# FACILITY AND APPARATUS

- **Conduct a space needs analysis of the fire department and its existing station, based upon the future, long-term operational mission(s) of the department to determine whether to renovate, expand, or replace the existing facility.**
- **The Plympton Fire Department should right-size its apparatus fleet.**

# EMS SERVICE DELIVERY

- **The Town of Plympton should not seek to privatize its EMS operations as, at the current time, it does not appear to make fiscal sense for the community.**
- **THE TOWN OF PLYMPTON SHOULD DEFINITELY CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALL OPTIONS FOR POSSIBLY SHARING FIRE AND EMS SERVICES WITH THE TOWN OF HALIFAX, THAT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF SERVICE BEING PROVIDED TO BOTH COMMUNITIES.**





# SHARED SERVICE OPTION

- **Requires a well thought out, phased approach.**
- **To attain success in the development of a shared services project, a realistic timeframe must be established, and all stakeholders should be involved as the project is developed.**
- **MRI developed a list of 94 foundational questions to begin the process and provide a basis for information sharing between the two communities.**



# THE FUTURE

- Department faces serious challenges both now and in the future.
- Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator need to take an active role in setting vision and goals for the fire department.
- Revitalizing a viable...and properly trained...call firefighting force.
- Excellent and viable shared services opportunities exist to provide town with continued quality ALS service but do so more cost effectively.



# THE FUTURE

- Long term development of the organization, its officers, and fire fighters.



# FINAL THOUGHTS

- Each of the 50 recommendations should be given careful consideration.
- View each recommendation as a goal.
- Approach the recommendations strategically & systematically to develop short & long term goals.
- Recognize each accomplishment.





# DUST COLLECTOR OR USEFUL TOOL? WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

Provides the Town of Plympton and Plympton Fire Department with 50 recommendations.

A roadmap to guide you moving forward.

The outcome is up to you.



# Thank You



**Website:**

**[www.mrigov.com](http://www.mrigov.com)**

