

Analysis of Fire/EMS Services

for the



*City of Mendota
Illinois*

and the

Mendota Fire Department



Submitted by:



McGrath Consulting Group, Inc.

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Executive Summary

The intent of the Executive Summary is to provide an overview of the critical issues and opportunities identified by the consultants during the study. The reader is highly encouraged to read the document in its entirety in order to gain an understanding of the recommendations presented within the report. Reading only the Executive Summary does not provide ample information on which to base decisions or to judge the recommendations made within this report. It is important to understand that this type of study is a snapshot in time, and findings were based on assessments of the Mendota Fire Department (MFD) during site visits as well as the materials and data provided by stakeholders.

McGrath Consulting Group was commissioned by the City of Mendota, IL to conduct an analysis of their fire and emergency medical services (EMS). The report offers a number of recommendations for the City and the Department to improve the Department and the services it provides.

The Department and the City have numerous opportunities to improve the services to the public; however, first and foremost the differences between the Mayor/Council and the Fire Chief/Department must be addressed. Without addressing the “iceberg” there is little hope of making significant progress in improving the Department or services, now or in the immediate future.

The consultants are recommending restructuring the Department to address leadership and management issues within the organization. These changes result in removing the Fire Chief from the 24-shift and making this position based on a 40-hour work week. Additionally, McGrath Consulting is recommending the elimination of the Assistant Fire Chief position and the creation of a shift lieutenant for each of the three shifts. We are also recommending the hiring of four additional firefighters to properly staff the shifts and decrease overtime and associated costs. Total Fire Department staffing would increase from the current six employees to ten employees.

The Department collects a great deal of data concerning its operations and the data meets the criteria for good data as outlined by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. However, the Department does not use its data in the day-to-day operations, policy development, or financial planning. The Department must incorporate the use of its data into these areas as well as others. It is essential that the Department find a suitable replacement for its Firehouse records management system. Lastly concerning data, the Council and the Fire Chief must discuss and agree on what data the Council needs to review and understand to oversee the operations of the Department. The Fire Chief must report this data to the Council on an agreed time frame.

Concerning the fire prevention program, the City needs to obtain a legal opinion concerning the issue of performing fire prevention inspections by the Fire Department. Illinois law regarding this issue is ambiguous at best; however, the consultants have found numerous indications from the Illinois Fire Marshal’s Office that strongly suggests that the Department should be performing fire inspections. Mendota’s ordinances also require that the Fire Chief perform fire inspections within the City. Other fire departments within Illinois are performing fire inspections in their communities.

Closely related to fire inspections is the task of pre-incident planning. The Department is not performing pre-incident planning and the report recommends that they engage in this activity for the benefit of the property owners and the safety of the Department's firefighters.

The Department's training program is mostly comprised of computer-based learning with little actual hands-on training. Incorporating a rigorous competency-based training program will benefit the Department greatly and aid in the retention and recruitment of paid-on-call personnel (POC). POC participation will improve if they know and understand that quality, hands on, competency based, training that incorporates the full-time staff occurs on a regular basis. Quality training builds comradery among employees and leads to more efficient operations.

Concerning the Department's facilities, the City should consider remodeling/replacement of the current Fire Station 1, especially if improvements can be made in the station's existing footprint. This station was originally designed to house one firefighter and the Department has outgrown this facility. The City would greatly benefit from the service of a profession engineer/architect who has an extensive experience in the design of modern fire station facilities.

The McGrath Consulting Group has made a number of recommendations in the area of Human Resources. First the City must develop and incorporate yearly performance evaluations for all employees. McGrath has outlined a specific recommendation regarding the performance review of the Fire Chief designed to improve performance. Secondly the City has specific policies regarding nepotism and conflict of interests that have not been followed. The report outlines a number of recommendations to reduce the impact of these two subjects within the Fire Department that can be applied to other departments in the City if there are other examples of nepotism and conflicts of interest. Thirdly, all employees in the Fire Department must have formal job descriptions that outline their duties and responsibilities as well as requirements personnel must meet to hold that position. These should be in policy form rather than ordinance form. The final area the consultants would like to touch upon in the area of Human Resources is the issue of the development of a recruitment and retention program for all paid-on-call firefighters. Recruitment and retention programs are very common and are increasingly being adopted by states due to their effectiveness in recruiting and retaining of volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters.

The Mendota City Council must evaluate its services, contracts, and fees it charges for fire and ambulance service to the Troy Grove Mendota Fire Protection District. Neither contract for ambulance or fire services could be located and the associated fees for fire and ambulance service is not appropriate. The City has two options, renegotiate the contracts and charges so that they reflect the actual cost to deliver the service, or simply discontinue the service to the Rural. McGrath Consulting is not recommending that City stop providing ambulance service to the Rural; however, fees charged must be commensurate with providing ambulance service.

The City would benefit greatly from a capital improvement program for the planned acquisition and replacement of fire apparatus and major equipment. This program will allow for better planning taking into any financial limitations that may exist, especially in future years. Typical capital improvement programs project apparatus and equipment needs for at least five years and are updated yearly. Regarding apparatus, the Department would benefit greatly from a formal apparatus replacement program for fire apparatus and ambulances. The remounting of ambulance bodies on new chassis would extend the life of ambulances and control overall replacement costs. However, replacement must be based on data not just miles driven or age of vehicles.

The McGrath Consulting Group has made numerous recommendations in this report and the Council and Fire Department must thoroughly read and contemplate an implement strategy. This report can serve as a potential informal strategic plan to address the needs of the Department. While the consultants have made priority recommendations, the Council and Fire Department will need to prioritize what recommendations should be pursued and when they should be accomplished.

Introduction

McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. was commissioned by the City of Mendota to develop a Comprehensive Analysis of Fire/EMS Operations of the Mendota Fire Department. The Study is a comprehensive assessment of the City of Mendota Fire Department and includes a review of the current fire department operations, fire stations conditions, apparatus and equipment, department training, policies and procedures, use of technology, emergency responses and activities, fiscal budget, human resource policies, mutual aid, fire prevention and inspections, and the fiscal limitations on emergency response. The Final Report is a plan that addresses current and future opportunities while ensuring the provision of fire/EMS services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. This document is a book of opportunities for future planning of fire and EMS service delivery.

Three consultants were assigned to the City of Mendota with one consultant making site visits. To complete this Study, the Consultants conducted a series of interviews with Council members, City officials, Department leadership, Department union leadership, Department members, and other identified stakeholders. In addition to the site surveys conducted, past documentation pertaining to Fire Department services was reviewed. However, it is important for the reader to understand that a Study of this nature is a ***snapshot in time***, and numbers of employees, apparatus, and policies can be fluid.

Any report of this nature is only as good as the data and information provided to the Consulting Team. For a Study of this nature, a significant amount of documentations was needed. Every effort was made to obtain accurate data and examine the issues from a non-prejudicial perspective. Therefore, the recommendations made within this report are based on quantitative and qualitative data such as; data provided by the department officials, City employees, interviews of Council Members, observations, standards, research, and sources that are associated with the topic, and the experience of the Consultants – who have spent years in either fire and EMS emergency services or an aspect related to that endeavor.

Recommendation Priority Hierarchy

The recommendations made within this report utilize the table below as to the priority given by the Consultants. The Master Plan section has listed the recommendations that pertain to this section in the priority order described below:

Table 1: Recommendation of Priority Hierarchy

Report Priority Hierarchy		
Priority	Definition	Example
1	Urgent /Immediate	Recommendations that require immediate or action/inaction by the governing body. Examples include but are not limited to compliance with regulations, laws, life safety, physiological or environmental needs.
2	Pressing	Significant impact on the organization; action needed as soon as possible.
3	Important	The organization will benefit by addressing soon, items that should be accomplished.
4	Future Consideration	Items that need to be addressed; develop future plan of action, low consequence of delay in action.
5	Information Only	The organization should be aware; take it under consideration.

Community Overview

Mendota resides in La Salle County, IL and is located approximately 100 miles southwest of Chicago and approximately 150 miles north of Springfield, IL. Ottawa is the La Salle County seat and Mendota is approximately 30 miles north from Ottawa. La Salle's County population is approximately 108,669 and Mendota's population represents approximately 6.5% of the County's population.

The name Mendota is a Native American word that means the "Crossing of Trails." The name came about because of the number of railroads that crossed in the mid-1850s. The railroads played an important part in the development of this City. The City of Mendota was incorporated in 1853. The railroad supported the farming community by bringing agricultural equipment and goods to the early settlers of Mendota.

The first building that was constructed was the Passenger House which was both a hotel and a railroad depot. This building was primarily built as a result of passengers changing trains to travel on to St. Louis from Chicago. The Illinois Central Railroad was the first chartered railroad in Mendota.

In addition to the influence of the railroads, Mendota had an industrial base that included some industries such as Mother Hubbard Washboards and Schaller and Goebel Buggies and Carriages. Mendota also supported the agricultural community because farm equipment was manufactured in the City. Mendota was also home to the Extra Pale company. Between 1865 and 1887 high style pump organs were made in Mendota.

Mendota Community Hospital opened a new hospital at 1315 Memorial Drive in 1951. In 2009 construction began on a new hospital located at 1401E 12th Street and opened its doors in December of 2011. In April of 2015 the hospital was bought out by OSF and became Saint Paul Medical Center.

Today Mendota has a diverse employer base that includes but is not limited to such employers as OSF Saint Paul Medical Center, ADM, Plano Molding Company, Ridley Incorporated, and Advanced Drainage Systems.

Mendota is Amtrak Community and is served by eight passenger trains daily in addition to numerous freight trains that stop and transverse the City daily.

The city encompasses approximately 5.15 square miles and the 2020 population according to the Census Bureau was 7,061 people. The City has a population density of approximately 1,371 people per square mile. The following chart illustrates the population growth of the City since 1970.

Table 2: City of Mendota Population 1970-2020

Year	Population	Pop (+/-)
1970	6,902	12.2%
1980	7,134	3.4%
1990	7,018	-1.6%

Year	Population	Pop (+/-)
2000	7,272	3.6%
2020	7,061	-2.9%
Median	7,061	3.4%

The mean population since 1970 is 7,075 and since 1970 the City's population average population growth was 3.4%. The total population change from 1970 to 2020 was 14.7%.

The following table provides population and population density for all areas served by the Mendota Fire Department. For Bureau County, the Department only serves approximately ten squares of the township.

Table 3: Population and Densities of MFS Service Area

Municipality	Square Miles	Population	Pop Density
City of Mendota	5.15	7,061	1,371.07
Mendota Township	30.85	149	4.83
Troy Grove Township	36	1,333	37.03
Meriden Township	22	311	14.14
Ophir Township	22	486	22.09
Bureau County	12	50	4.17
Totals	128	9,390	73.36

Governance and Management

City of Mendota

The City of Mendota utilizes the council/mayor form of government. The Mayor represents the executive branch and is elected to a term of four years. The Mayor appoints the City's department heads upon advice and consent of the City of Council. According to § 158-2 (A) The Fire Chief is appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council.

The Mayor is also responsible for appointing standing committees, one of which is the public safety committee. This committee consists of at least four council members and is given the responsibility of general management, control, and supervision of the Fire Department (as well as other departments i.e., police department). The committee is also responsible for making general reports of topics the committee deems important to the entire council and to carry out duties regarding the Fire Department as may be prescribed through motion, resolution, or ordinance.

The consultant was informed that the Fire Chief reports to the Mayor and the Council and that the Public Safety Committee is not utilized. Therefore, the Mendota Municipal Code should be updated to reflect this change.

The Mayor is also responsible for the appointment of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners (FPC), with the consent of City Council. This three (3) person board is responsible for the establishment of eligibility lists, and the hiring process of Officers. According to the Rules and Regulations updated 12/22/2020, this board is also responsible for the promotional process of the position of Lieutenant and Deputy Chief; and is the hearing body for suspensions and discharges, although it is not clear if the FPC is currently performing promotional or hearings for the Fire Department. The current discipline SOP for the Department does not include the FPC, and the organization has neither the rank Lieutenant nor Deputy Chief, and the Assistant Chief was selected by the Mayor.

Recommendation – Public Safety Committee

- § 13.-10 (B) regarding the public safety committee should be eliminated from the Mendota Municipal code to reflect the actual practice in effect. **Priority 3.**

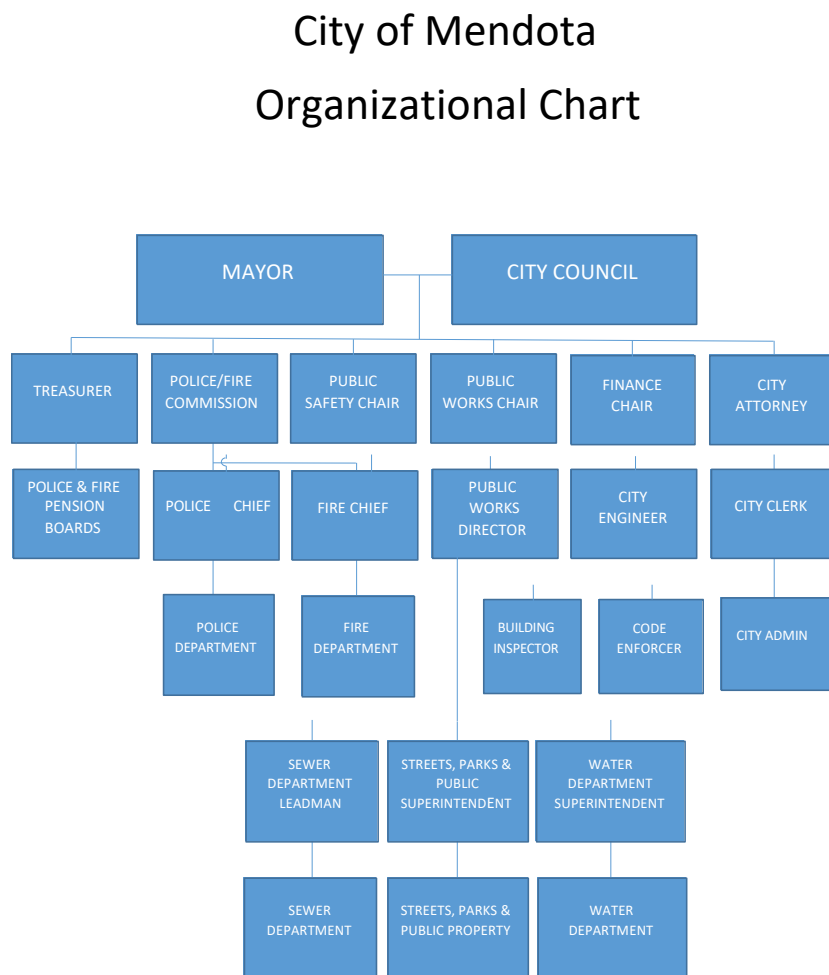
Recommendation – Police and Fire Commission

- The City's policies and Department SOG's should be written to incorporate the responsibilities of the FPC per existing Rules and Regulations dated 12/22/2020. **Priority 2**

The council represents the legislative branch and consists of eight alder persons who all serve a four-year term. There are four wards in the City and each ward is represented by two council members; in addition to other duties, Council members must serve on one or more of committees as outlined in the Mendota Municipal Code.

The following figure illustrates the table of organization for the City of Mendota.

Figure 1: Table of Organization City of Mendota



The clerk and treasurer are also elected, and each serve four-year terms as well. Elections for the Mayor and Council are held on the first Tuesday of every odd-numbered year.

Mendota Fire Department

The Mendota Fire Department is headed by a Fire Chief who is appointed by the Mayor upon advice and consent of the council. The term for Fire Chief is one year and the appointment of the Fire Chief is made at the first meeting in May of each year. The Fire Chief is aided by Assistant Fire Chief who is appointed by the Mayor with consent and advice of the council as well.

The Fire Chief's duties are outlined in the Mendota Municipal Code, § 158-2 and is required to produce an annual report, conduct fire inspections, enforce ordinances, command at fires, and prescribe rules for maintain discipline in the Department as well as other duties.

§ 29-8 Fire Truckdriver/engineer/EMT, references the position of Director of the Mendota Ambulance Service; however, there is no other references to the Ambulance Director in the Municipal Code. The Ambulance Director position is not referenced in the City's organizational chart, nor is there any mention of the position in Ordinance No. 04-19-21 concerning vacations, sick leave, other leaves, and wages of the employees of the City of Mendota. Based on the research of the consultant it appears as the Municipal Code may not been updated since the merging of the Mendota Community Ambulance Service and the Mendota Fire Department. If this is indeed the case the Municipal Code should be amended to reflect the current positions in the Mendota Fire Department.

Recommendation – Mendota Municipal Code

- *The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to remove the reference to the Director of the Mendota Ambulance Service is this position no longer exists. **Priority 4.***
- *The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to remove volunteers and include paid-on-call, who are classified as employees. **Priority 4.***
- *The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to reflect the position of Firefighter and allow the City to identify its responsibilities as an Engineer and medical status in an updated job description, so it may change as the department/city's needs change. **Priority 4.***

Fire Department Overview

The Mendota Fire Department has a long and storied history beginning November 28, 1867, when an ordinance was passed creating a fire marshal who could “draft” bystanders at the scene of a fire to render assistance. After a series of devastating fires the Mendota Council authorized the purchase of firefighting equipment and passed an ordinance to create a fire department in 1871. The first fire company was called the Independent Fire Company.

In 1876 the Champion Fire Company was formed and listed 25 members on its roster. A chemical engine was purchased and housed in the Independent Fire Company’s quarters until the Champion Fire Company could find a station of its own.

After several more devastating fires the City of Mendota arranged to connect its water mains to the C. B. & O. Railway’s water tank. This represented a major improvement that resulted in water streams being able to be projected 60 feet in the air and more than 100 feet away! Unfortunately, during the Passenger House fire, it was discovered that the streams would not work until the C. B. & O. Railway’s engineer could arrive to boost the pressure up. Prior to the fire, C. B. & O. engineer lived in the county and his residence was soon relocated to the City of Mendota.

Another milestone was reached in 1919 when Mendota acquired a new American LaFrance gasoline powered firetruck. In 1928 the rural area surrounding Mendota purchased a GMC firetruck equipped with hoses and ladders; this firetruck was later transferred to the City of Mendota. The City went on to purchase a Diamond T chassis that General Fire Apparatus Company outfitted with a pump and a water tank. The City continued to update its fleet with several more purchases of firetrucks into the 1960s, 1970s and beyond.

The Mendota Troy Grove Fire Protection District was created on June 7, 1946 and saw the collaboration of the Fire Protection District and City with regard to the use and storage of the District’s firetruck. The City would use the vehicle in exchange for storage and use of the apparatus. The District also paid a nominal fee to the City. The City also went on to furnish the Fire Protection District with staffing during fires and was assisted by numerous other communities in the area.

In the early 1990s the City of Mendota hired its first full-time personnel. Three firefighters staffed fire station 1 and staffing was one full-time person per shift.

Regarding the history of emergency medical services, in the early 1970s the local funeral homes provided emergency medical services to the City and surrounding areas. In 1974 the City purchased an ambulance, and it was stored in the fire station. Later that same year the Mendota Community Ambulance service was started, and a director was hired to organize and operate the ambulance service and its volunteers. In 1986 the citizens approved a referendum to provide additional funding for the ambulance service. At that time, the ambulance service was only for City of Mendota’s residents.

The Community Ambulance Service continued until about 1993 when the City's Fire Department began working collaboratively. The Fire Department began to provide 1st Responder services with a pumper and the ambulance would respond with volunteers to transport the patient, if needed, by ambulance. In 1994 the City hired an additional three firefighters to supplement the firefighters who were already working on shift. In 1996 the Department began paramedic training and eventually all of the staff were trained to the paramedic level. From that point the Fire Department began permanently providing ambulance service to Mendota.

Today, the Department provides paramedic level transport services and paramedic intercept services to other ambulances services when staffing is available. The Department's resource hospital is Mercy Health located at 2623 Edgemont Street, in Rockford, IL and the Department's medical director is Dr. Matt Smetana. The Department primarily transports its patients to OSF St. Paul Medical Center in Mendota; however, some patients are transported to St Elizabeth Medical Center in Ottawa, IL. The Department does perform occasional transfers to OSF Saint Anthony's, Mercy Health in Rockford, IL.

The Department provides fire and EMS services to the City and the Troy Grove Mendota Fire District covering 128 square miles and a population of 9,390 with approximately with six full-time firefighter/paramedics and approximately 15 paid on call firefighters.

Stakeholder Comments

The consultants conducted numerous interviews with stakeholders that included council members, Fire and Police Commission members, other city officials, Fire Department leadership, career firefighters, and paid-on-call firefighters. The consultants include the summation of the comments from the various stakeholders to give the reader a perspective of the overall view and culture of the Fire Department and City Council/Administration.

The relationship between City governing official(s) and the Fire Chief appears to have a history of non-compatibility. It is not the purpose of the consultants to identify which party is correct and which party is incorrect; rather unless the relationship improves the challenges facing Mendota will not be addressed or resolved. The issues resemble an iceberg.

The Iceberg Reality:

Figure 2: Iceberg



Like an iceberg, only 10% of the issue is showing and the dangerous 90% remains hidden from view. The issue is much larger than the Mayor/Council/Fire Chief.

The consultants find themselves in difficult position of having to openly discuss the issues under the water's surface; but the reality of the current environment requires such. First and foremost, there is a clear communication issue between fire leadership and that of the City. This communication issue is clearly problematic to the point that it is dysfunctional and negatively affects the operation of the Fire Department. The problem lies specifically with the relationship between the Mayor and the Fire Chief. There is significant mistrust between the Fire Department and City

Administration/Council. Fire Department personnel feel as though the Council would like to do away with the full-time (union) employees altogether and replace them with paid-on-call personnel. Conversely, there is a great deal lack of knowledge and doubt as to what really occurs in the Fire Department and what is truly needed for the Department by the Council and Administration.

The Mayor is perceived as an individual that does not care for organized labor and has little interest in what the Fire Department does beyond the dollars it takes to operate the Department. The Fire Chief is perceived as very good at emergency scene management; however, a poor administrator. It is perceived that the Mayor and Fire Chief intentionally attempt to undermine each other. The Fire Chief is perceived as someone who does not disclose all of the information regarding issues and the operations of the Department. He is further viewed as someone who hold his cards (information) close to his vest.

The consultants inquired as to the perceived reason for the conflict, and it was identified as the differences between the Mayor and Fire Chief. Further, the Mayor is perceived as someone who discourages discussion among Council members or differences of opinion regarding the operations and issues/needs of the Department. The Fire Chief is perceived as someone who does not follow through on tasks or directions given to him by the Council and in general is not a very good communicator and administrator.

The City does not currently conduct performance evaluations, which should start immediately. This is a formal platform for the City to document its expectations of the Chief going forward and measure that performance in a formal manner. Thereafter, if the Chief does not perform to the level of expectation outlined, the Council should develop a performance improvement plan with clearly written goals and objectives along with specific timelines for completion and sustained performance. In addition, the Mayor and Council must provide the needed resources and support in order for the Fire Chief to be successful in meeting his goals and objectives. If memorializing expectations and a performance improvement plan is not successful, then the City must weigh its options in leadership in the Fire Department. One individual should be appointed to carry out to meet with the Fire Chief to discuss the progress/problems and serve as a coach and mentor in addressing the management of the Department. Further information will be provided in the Human Resources section of this report.

For long term success of the organization the Mayor, Council, and Fire Chief must address these differences through the use of a facilitator who is trained in teamwork development. If this issue(s) cannot be resolved, it is doubtful that any improvement can be made in the Department and City concerning fire and EMS service delivery.

Recommendation – Documented Performance Evaluation

- *The Council should conduct a performance evaluation process to establish written expectations and routine feedback for the Fire Chief to assist to facilitate successful management of the Department and relations between the Chief, the Council and Mayor. The City must commit to the Fire Chief the needed resources and support for the Fire Chief to be successful in meeting the provisions of the performance expectations. **Priority 1.***

Recommendation – Conflict Resolution/Teamwork Development

- *The Council must address the issues between the Fire Chief and the Mayor regarding their differences. It is recommended that a professional facilitator be contracted and that the Council and Department membership be involved in the discussions and teamwork development. **Priority 1.***

National Standards

There are numerous national standards and codes fire departments must be aware of. When a serious incident occurs (such as a serious injury or death of a firefighter), departments are typically judged by these standards. Therefore, it is prudent to discuss national standards that impact the fire department and EMS services. Consideration as to the implications of these standards to the Department can only be determined by those that govern, inasmuch as most of the standards are not mandatory. This report contains pertinent information from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Insurance Service Office (ISO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Center of Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Non-mandatory

Established in 1896 by a group of insurance firm representatives, NFPA's mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. As the world's leading advocate for fire prevention and an authoritative source on public safety, NFPA develops, publishes, and disseminates more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. These codes and standards are developed by technical committees staffed by over 6,000 volunteers and are adopted and enforced throughout the world.

The NFPA has many standards that affect fire departments. These standards should be assessed and considered by fire departments to protect fire and EMS personnel from unnecessary workplace hazards. The NFPA standards establish the standard of care that may be used to evaluate fire department performance in civil lawsuits against fire and rescue departments (NFPA, 1995). In most cases, compliance with NFPA standards is voluntary. However, in some cases, federal or state OSHA agencies have incorporated wording from NFPA standards into regulations. In these cases, compliance with the standards is mandatory.

Regardless of whether compliance with an NFPA standard is voluntary or mandatory, fire and rescue departments must consider the impact of "voluntary" standards on private litigation. In some states, a department may be liable for the negligent performance of its duties. Even in states that protect rescue workers under an immunity statute, most state laws do not protect fire or rescue departments for grossly negligent or willful and wanton acts. Essentially, negligence involves the violation of a standard of care that results in injury or loss to some other individual or organization.

NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720

NFPA adopted two (2) standards addressing Fire Department organization and development: NFPA 1710 (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments), and a sister standard NFPA 1720 (Organization and

Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer/Paid-On-Call Fire Departments).

Why Does It Matter Which NFPA Code?

Although NFPA 1720 is very comprehensive, it is not as stringent as NFPA 1710. The Consultants recommend that the Department **does not adopt** NFPA 1720; rather they should attempt to meet as many of the NFPA 1720 standards as feasibly and fiscally possible. Taking the NFPA 1720 standards under advisement should not significantly change the current operations of the Department nor diminish the current service level.

If a department's employees are both career and paid-on-call, they are classified as a "combination fire department." NFPA's definition of a combination fire department is:

3.3.16.1 Combination Fire Department. *A fire department having emergency service personnel comprising less than 85 percent majority of either volunteer or career membership.*

At the time of the study the following table indicates the authorized positions for the Mendota Fire Department.

Table 4: Combination Fire Departments

Authority Having Jurisdiction		
Staffing	Authorized	% of Total
Career	6	24.0%
Part-Time	4	16.0%
Paid-on-call	15	60.0%
Totals	25	100%

Source: NFPA Decision for Combination Departments

When a department is defined as a combination department, the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), in this case, the City Council, can determine if they wish to refer to (not adopt) NFPA 1710 (Career) or NFPA 1720 (Volunteer, Part-time, Paid-On-Call). As the area protected by the Mendota Fire Department consists of approximately 128 square miles, the consultants recommend referring to NFPA 1720.

Suppression Staffing and Response NFPA 1720 Standard

Under NFPA 1720, the number of responding Firefighters and the amount of time in which they are required to respond varies with the number of people (population) per square mile to eight-mile radius as illustrated in the table below:

Table 5: NFPA 1720: 4.3.2 Staffing and Response Time (edition 2020)

Demand Zone (a)	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond (b)	Response Time (Minutes) (c)	Meet Objective (%)
<i>Urban</i>	<i>>1,000/mi²</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Suburban</i>	<i>500-1,000/mi²</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Rural</i>	<i><500/mi²</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Remote</i>	<i>≥ 8 miles</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Related to Travel Distance</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Special Risk</i>	<i>AHJ*</i>	<i>AHJ*</i>	<i>AHJ*</i>	<i>90</i>

** Determined by Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)*

a) A jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone.

b) Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJ's Department and automatic aid.

c) Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch notification and ends at the time interval shown in the table.

For example, if the fixed population is 500 to 1,000 people within one square mile, the Department should respond with a minimum of ten (10) Firefighters within ten minutes, 80% of the time. This is considerably less stringent than the NFPA 1710 requirement for the same criteria of 14 Firefighters (one additional if the aerial is utilized) within a five-minute response from the time of notification by dispatch 90% of the time.

NFPA 1720 Special Interest

The NFPA 1720 standard is comprehensive and those who govern and lead the Fire Department should be familiar with the components of this document; it is less stringent than NFPA 1710. What should be of special interest to the Department is Chapter 4 of NFPA 1720, 2020 edition:

Chapter 4 Organization, Operation, and Deployment

4.1 Fire Suppression Organization

4.2 Community Risk Management

4.3 Staffing and Deployment

4.4 Reporting Requirements

4.5 Fire Suppression Operations

4.6 Initial Fire-Fighting Operations

4.7 Sustained Fire-Fighting Operations

4.8 Intercommunity Organization

4.9 Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

4.10 Special Operations

4.3 Staffing and Deployment

4.3.1. The fire department shall identify minimum staffing requirements to ensure that a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively.

4.3.2* The table (previous) shall be used by the AHJ to determine staffing and response time objectives for structural firefighting, based on a low-hazard occupancy such as a 2,000 ft² two-story, single-family home without basement and exposures and the percentage accomplishment of those objectives for reporting purposes as required in 4.4.2. (reference to previous table).

At one time, the only staffing and response time requirements pertaining to volunteer and paid on-call Departments were as follows:

Upon assembling the necessary resources at the emergency scene, the Fire Department shall have the capability to safely commence an initial attack within two minutes 90 percent of the time.

Today Departments qualifying under NFPA 1720 must comply with staffing and response times as illustrated in the table above.

4.4.2 Annual Evaluation

4.4.2.1. The fire department shall evaluate its level of service, deployment delivery, and response time objectives on an annual basis.

4.4.2.2. The evaluation shall be based on data relating to level of service deployment, and the achievement of each response time objective in each demand zone within the jurisdiction of the fire department.

Quadrennial Report

4.4.3 Quadrennial Report. The fire department shall provide the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) with a written report, quadrennially, which shall be based on the annual evaluation required by 4.4.2.

4.4.3.2 This report shall explain the predictable consequences of identified deficiencies and address the steps within a fire department's strategic plan necessary to achieve compliance.

4.5 Fire Suppression Operations

NFPA 1720 is much less stringent than NFPA 1710 (career departments), which specifies how many individuals must be on the emergency scene to begin an interior fire attack. However, the following standards do apply to volunteer and paid on-call departments:

4.5.1 Incident commander. One individual shall be assigned as the incident commander.

4.5.1.2 The incident commander shall be responsible for the overall coordination and direction of all activities for the duration of the incident.

4.6.1 Initial firefighting operations shall be organized to ensure that at least four members are assembled before interior fire suppression operations are initiated in a hazardous area.

4.6.3 Outside the hazardous area, a minimum of two members shall be present for assistance or rescue of the team operating in the hazardous area.

4.6.4 Initial attack operations shall be organized to ensure that if, upon arrival at the emergency scene, initial attack personnel find an imminent life-threatening situation where immediate action could prevent the loss of life or serious injury, such action is permitted with less than four personnel when conducted in accordance with NFPA 1500.

4.7.1 The fire department shall have the capability for sustained operations, including fire suppression; engagement in search and rescue, forcible entry, ventilation, and preservation of property; accountability for personnel; the deployment of dedicated rapid intervention crew (RIC); and provision of support activities for those situations that are beyond the capability of the initial attack.

It is important to re-emphasize that NFPA standards are just that, “standards,” and not mandatory by law for a fire department to meet. However, once an incident occurs, the Department will be judged on its performance as compared with the NFPA standards. It is not recommended that any Department intentionally disregard these NFPA standards; rather, a Department should work to meet them.

EMS Incidents

The NFPA 1720 (2020 edition) standard requires the fire department to establish its role, responsibilities, functions, and objectives for delivery of EMS. EMS treatment levels include:

- First Responders/Emergency Medical Responders
- Basic Life Support (BLS)
- Advance Life Support (ALS)

Fire departments turnout time (out the door) is 60 seconds or less; this objective should be met 90% of the time.

It is important to recognize the American Heart Association has recognized the survivor percentage of someone who is not breathing and has no pulse diminishes quickly after four (4) minutes. We can apply the four (4)-minute response time goal for our first responding EMS crew:

- *If EMS intervention or citizen Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is performed within the first 4 (4) minutes, patient survival rate is 45%; however, that number drops to 10.6% of patient discharge from hospital.*

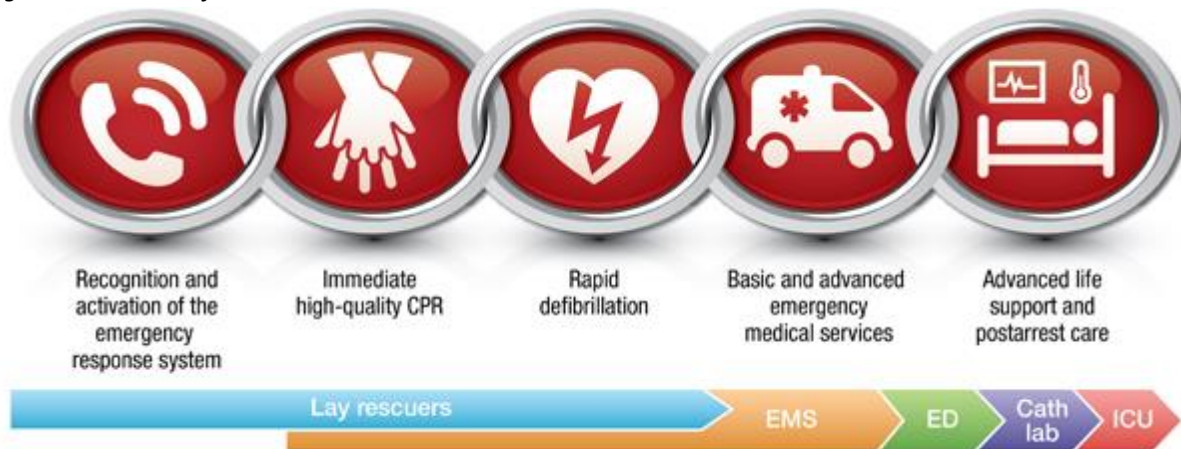
- Every minute without patient intervention for a non-breathing, non-heartbeat patient, the chances of survival decrease by 10%. Brain damage occurs within 4 to 6 minutes without patient intervention.
- If patient treatment (citizen CPR or EMS) is not provided within 10 minutes, the survival rate is close to zero.
- Citizens performing CPR prior to the arrival of EMS is the most critical component to patient survival.
- Few resuscitation attempts are successful after 10 minutes without patient intervention.
- Currently, about 9 in 10 people who have cardiac arrest outside the hospital die without patient intervention.

Source: American Heart Association – multiple sites

EMS Chain of Survival

The figure below illustrates the most recent intervention for a victim having a heart attack and includes the use of an AED for rapid defibrillation applied by a civilian.

Figure 3: EMS Chain of Survival:



Recommendation – NFPA 1720

- The City should not adopt NFPA 1720. Adoption would include the adoption of all OSHA and NFPA standards by reference. However, a plan should be developed to meet as many standards as possible in the future. **Priority 5**

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Mandatory

OSHA states that “once fire fighters begin the interior attack on an interior structural fire, the atmosphere is assumed to be “immediately dangerous to life or health” (IDLH) and section (g) (4) of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard, 29, CFR 1910.134 [**two-in/two-out**] applies.” OSHA defines interior structural firefighting “as the physical activity of fire suppression, rescue, or both inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage.” This rule is commonly referred to as the “**two-in/two-out**” rule, which is OSHA’s mandatory requirement for interior firefighting.

OSHA requires that all firefighters engaged in interior structural firefighting must wear Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). SCBAs must be NIOSH-certified, positive pressure, with a minimum duration of 30 minutes. [29 CFR 1910.156(f) (1) (ii)] and [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (4) (iii)]

OSHA requires that all workers engaged in interior structural firefighting operations beyond the incipient stage use SCBA and work in teams of two or more. [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (4) (I)] Fire fighters operating in the interior of the structure must always operate in a buddy system and maintain voice or visual contact with one another. This assists in assuring accountability within the team. [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (4) (I)]

OSHA requires at least one team of two or more properly equipped and trained fire fighters are present outside the structure before any team of fire fighters enters the structure fire. This requirement is intended to assure that the team outside the structure has the training, clothing, and equipment to protect them and, if necessary, safely, and effectively rescue fire fighters inside the structure. For high-rise operations, the team(s) would be staged below the IDLH atmosphere. [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (3) (iii)]

OSHA requires that one of the two outside person's functions be to account for and, if necessary, initiate a fire fighter rescue. Aside from this individual dedicated to tracking interior personnel, the other designated person is permitted to take on other roles, such as incident commander in charge of the emergency incident, safety officer, or equipment operator. However, the other designated outside person(s) cannot be assigned tasks that are critical to the safety and health of any other employee working at the incident.

Any task that the outside fire fighters perform while in standby rescue status must not interfere with the responsibility to account for those individuals in the hazard area. Any task, evolution, duty, or function being performed by the standby individual(s) must be such that the work can be abandoned, without placing any employee at additional risk, if rescue or other assistance is needed [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (4) (Note 1)]. Any entry into an interior structural fire beyond the incipient stage, regardless of the reason, must be made in teams of two or more individuals [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (4) (I)].

Insurance Service Offices, Inc (ISO)

Non-mandatory

ISO is a leading source of information about property casualty insurance risk that provides risk information to many industries, including government. The ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) program is designed to help establish fire insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties based in part on community's fire protection services. ISO™ rates communities every 10 years if their population is over 25,000 or 15 years if they are under 25,000. In addition, they send out questionnaires every 30 months.

By itself, ISO ratings do not provide a comprehensive assessment of staffing, deployment, and service delivery. Keep in mind that ISO is not an industry standard. It is only an index developed through a standardized data pool that is used by insurers to set rates.

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. publishes and utilizes the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) to “review available public fire suppression facilities, and to develop a Public Protection Classification for insurance purposes.” Once a fire department's capability is determined and classified, the information is communicated to and might be used by insurers to set rates for homeowners and commercial properties in local communities.

Although the primary purpose of this tool is to rate fire protection from which insurance rates can be established, ISO ratings have been one of the few benchmarks to compare community fire protection. Realizing the true intent of the ISO classification, it should not be the sole determining factor in establishing public fire protection. Rather, the schedule should be considered an instrument for comparison and an additional factor from which to make a decision.

Public Protection Classification Number

The Public Protection Classification Numbering system utilized by ISO is as follows:

Table 6: Source ISO - Public Protection Classification Numbering

PPC Score	Points
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0 to 9.99

In obtaining an ISO Classification, the grading is broken down into three (3) major categories, with Community Risk Reduction recently added as a fourth category resulting in the total percentage of 105.5%. Although the table below indicates points available for community risk reduction, the City of Mendota was last rated prior to the implementation of the community risk reduction factor so no values are included in this category, therefore the possible points for Mendota would be 100.00

Table 7: Source ISO - Point Values

ISO Point Value	% Value	Point Value
Receiving & Handling of Fire Alarms	10%	10
Fire Department	50%	50
Water Supply	40%	40
Community Risk Reduction	5.50%	5.5
Total Possible Points	105.50%	105.5

City of Mendota ISO Classification

ISO gives a single Public Protection Classification (PPC) number to the City. The City of Mendota PPC score of 4/8B as illustrated in the Table below:

Table 8: Mendota ISO PPC Classification

FSRS Item	Credit Earned	Credit Available
Emergency Reporting		
Credit for Telephone Service	2.00	2.00
Credit for Telecommunicators	3.00	3.00
Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.35	5.00
Credit for Receiving & Handling Fire Alarms	7.35	10.00
Fire Department		
Credit for Engine Companies	8.21	10.00
Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.52	1.00
Credit for Pumper Capacity	5.00	5.00
Credit for Ladder Service	4.87	5.00
Credit for Reserve Ladder & Service Trucks	0.44	1.00
Credit for Deployment Distribution	3.49	4.00
Credit for Company Personnel	2.96	5.00
Credit for Training	0.87	9.00
Credit for Operational Considerations	2.26	9.00
Credit for Fire Department	27.75	50.00
Water Supply		

FIRS Item	Credit Earned	Credit Available
Credit for Supply System	29.36	35.00
Credit for Hydrants	1.92	2.00
Credit for Inspection & Flow Testing	2.10	3.00
Credit for Water Supply	33.38	40.00
Divergence	-5.59	
Community Risk Reduction	0.00	0.00
Total Credit	62.89	100.00

As of December 2018 (Note: Scores are determined by ISO evaluator)

Split Classification

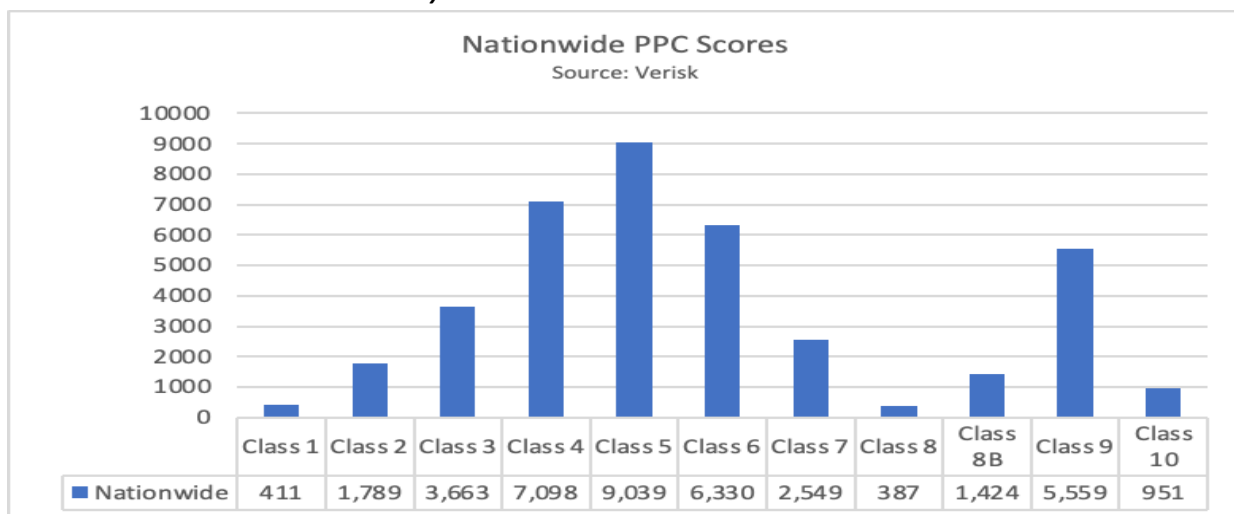
Split Classifications: **PPC Score Class 4/8B**. The first number is the class that applies to properties within 5 road miles of the responding fire station and 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, such as a fire hydrant, suction point, or dry hydrant.

The second number is the class that applies to properties within 5 road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, as illustrated below: **PPC Score Class /4X**. ISO generally assigns Class 10 to properties beyond 5 road miles.

National ISO Classifications – 2022

The Chart illustrates the ISO PPC scores for the U. S. in September 2021:

Chart 1: ISO National PPC Scores – February 2022

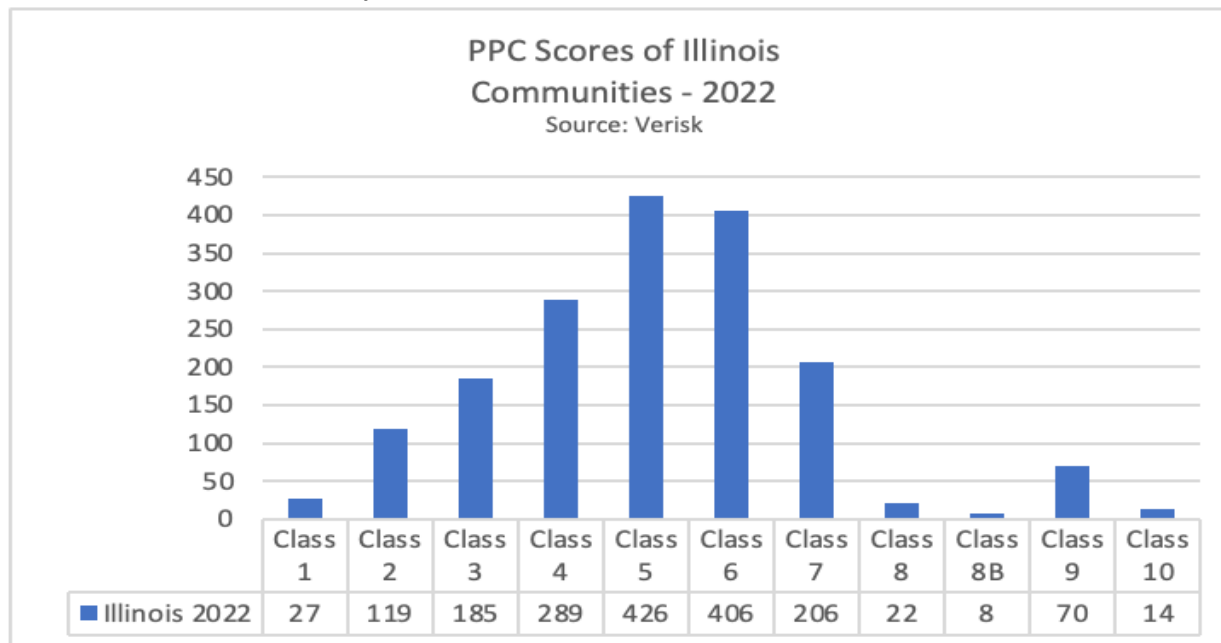


In 2022, there were a total of 39,200 departments evaluated by ISO, of which 7,098 received an ISO PPC classification of 4 that matched the City of Mendota score.

Illinois ISO Classifications – 2022

The Chart illustrates the ISO PPC scores for municipalities/districts in Illinois in 2022:

Chart 2: Illinois PPC Scores - February 2022



Of the 1,320 departments evaluated by ISO in the State of Illinois, 289 departments received a PPC rating of 4, matching the City of Mendota.

It is important to note what the ISO rating means to the City of Mendota. The ISO's purpose is to determine a fire insurance classification, which may be used in the calculation of property insurance premiums. Historically, ISO rating has not been conducted for property loss prevention or life safety purposes until recently when ISO allowed 5.5 points for factors achieved in Community Risk Reduction. Most insurance companies use the ISO rating as a benchmark and then use market data to establish competitive rates for residential properties.

Recommendation - ISO

- *An ISO classification of Class 04 is an excellent rating. However, the Consultants do not believe any additional resources or fiscal commitment should be made to reduce the classification. Rather, the City/departments should attempt to maintain the Class 04 rating in the future. **Priority 5***

Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

Non-mandatory

A better fire department evaluation tool exists; the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has developed a program that measures the quality and performance of a particular fire service agency and will award national accreditation to those departments that pass the stringent criteria. The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), the umbrella organization, utilizes a process known as the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). It specifies more than 250 performance indicators, including 70+ core competencies against which a fire agency can measure itself.

The CFAI is a structured process for documenting the levels of fire safety, fire prevention, fire safety education, fire suppression services currently provided, and for determining the future level of service the department should provide. The accreditation process asks the community to determine and document whether its fire protection services are appropriate, adequate, and effective.

The advantage to the CFAI accreditation program lies in the process itself. The department must examine every aspect of its existence and determine the most cost-effective means of providing service. This program requires a time commitment and effort on the part of the fire administration. If at some future point the Department wishes to seek accreditation, it is recommended that a single individual be assigned full-time for the completion of this project.

Although the Consultants do not recommend the Department begins the accreditation process, it is suggested that the administration look at the performance indicators or benchmarks set up for the evaluation process to use as a guide while developing policies and procedures for the Department.

Recommendation – Accreditation

- *The Department should not seek international accreditation (CFAI) at this juncture; rather, the CFAI performance indicators and core competencies should be utilized as a model for quality and a benchmark for examining and evaluating current practices. **Priority 5***

Emergency Response Data

Justifying Fire/EMS Departments' request for apparatus purchases, facility placement, staffing and a host of other critical issues need to be validated using accurate data. Often the difference between governing boards and Fire/EMS leadership interpretations for resources requires identifying the differences between **wants and needs**. This involves data and data analytics. From that data, information and knowledge can be obtained.

Nationally, Fire Departments are aggressive in data collection; however, when asked what they do with that data the answer most often heard is "we log every call into the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) forwarded to the state who in turn sends it to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) at the federal level."

What is sometimes lost in the Fire Service is the analysis and application of what the data tells the local Fire Chief. Although most Department leadership will provide some data, the actual utilization of this data is limited at best.

Why Retrieve Emergency Response Data

One of the main challenges Fire/EMS leadership faces is to identify the need for resources that will provide the highest level of service and safety, as well as to justify the fiscal resources needed. Good data is essential in accomplishing this mission. Department leadership must utilize data in their daily management including, but not limited to:

- Fiscal management
- Staffing
- Resource deployment
- Budgeting
- Purchasing
- Strategic planning
- Program development/implementation
- Program oversight/assessment
- Assuring competency
- Assuring cost-effective/efficient services
- Communication with governing board(s)

Leadership can quantify the above objectives through good data. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) defines good data as data that meets three (3) components:

- **Good Data is Relevant** – you are collecting information on the things that matter, like response times and number of calls for service.
- **Good Data is Accurate** – your processes for data collection must be consistent and trustworthy.

- **Good Data is Reliable** – a measurement from one company is equivalent to the same measurement from another company. You do not have to “adjust your data to accommodate known distortions.”

Source: International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC): *Weathering the Economic Storm*, December 2008

Mendota Fire Department Data

The Mendota Fire Department uses Firehouse/ESO Software for their data management. In addition to Firehouse® they also use Vector Solutions which is a web-based training software provided to the Department by the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. This software can record training data and track fire and EMS certifications so that firefighters and EMS personnel can effectively track their continuing education hours and recertify through the State of Illinois.

For emergency medical services reporting, the Department uses ImageTrend, which is provided to the Department by Mercy Health Hospital.

The Mendota collects data regarding all emergency responses and has the capability to separate the data between the City of Mendota and the Troy Grove Mendota Fire Protection District which is also referred to as the “Rural.” The term Troy-Grove Mendota Fire Protection District and the term Rural can be used interchangeably throughout this report. Thus, the consultants will present the data for the City and the Rural separately so that policy makers can understand the impact the Rural has on response resources of the Mendota Fire Department.

Ten Year Emergency Response Data

The following chart provides the ten-year call history of the City of Mendota. The Department saw an overall increase of 77 calls over the ten-year period for a total increase of 6.7%. Essentially the call volume has remained fairly stable over the last ten years for the City. The mean number of calls over the ten years was 1,115 calls.

Table 9: Ten Year Call History City of Mendota

Mendota City		
Year	Calls	Percent +/-
2011	1,136	-8.8%
2012	1,186	4.4%
2013	1,136	-4.2%
2014	1,107	-2.6%
2015	1,016	-8.2%
2016	1,077	6.0%
2017	1,098	1.9%
2018	1,098	0.0%
2019	1,103	0.5%

Mendota City		
2020	1,097	-0.5%
2021	1,213	10.6%

The next table shows the ten-year call volume for the Rural area. The calls for the Rural area have been fairly erratic over the last ten years. The Rural area saw an increase of 50 calls over the ten-year period or an increase of 53.8%. The mean number of calls over the ten-year period was 105.

Table 10: Ten Year Call History - Rural

Troy-Grove Rural		
Year	Calls	Percent +/-
2011	93	-2.1%
2012	97	4.3%
2013	121	24.7%
2014	93	-23.1%
2015	91	-2.2%
2016	86	-5.5%
2017	108	25.6%
2018	84	-22.2%
2019	120	42.9%
2020	116	-3.3%
2021	143	23.3%

The table below indicates the mean, or average, number of calls per year for 2019-2021 including both City and rural responses.

Table 11: MFD Average Calls Per Day

Year	Mean Calls/Day
2021	3.71
2020	3.32
2019	3.34

Incidents by Major Categories

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) provides a uniform reporting process for all fire departments that report their data to the federal government. Below is the percentage of classification of incidents for the Mendota City Fire Department as compared to the nation.

Table 12: Comparison of Mendota Incidents to the Nation

Incident Type	Mendota City	National %
100 - Fire	1.91%	3.80%
200 - Over Pressure/Explosion	0.03%	0.10%

Incident Type	Mendota City	National %
300 - Rescue/EMS	73.66%	64.80%
400 - Hazardous Condition	3.49%	3.40%
500 - Service Calls	13.38%	7.40%
600 - Good Intent Calls	3.20%	11.30%
700 - False Alarms/False Calls	3.99%	8.20%
800 - Severe Weather	0.18%	0.20%
900 - Special Incidents	0.18%	0.80%

Mendota has a higher percentage (8.86%) of EMS calls when compared to the nation as well as a higher percentage of service calls. The higher percentage of service calls is due to the classification of Invalid Assists as service calls rather than Rescue/EMS calls. Essentially the Mendota Fire Department is an EMS Department that performs a very low percentage of fires.

The next table provides the same data, only for the Rural area that the Department serves.

Table 13: Comparison of Rural Incidents to the Nation

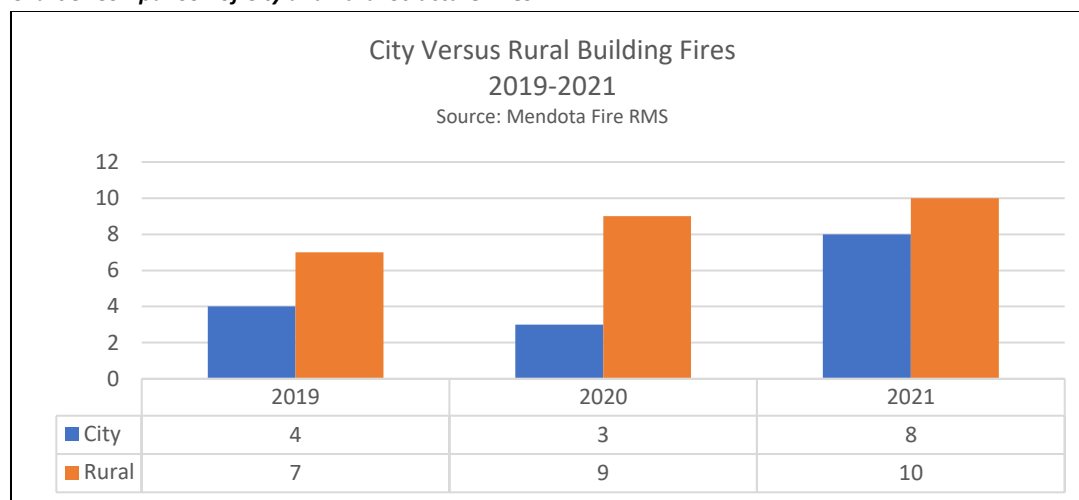
Incident Type	Troy-Grove Rural	National %
100 - Fire	23.06%	3.80%
200 - Over Pressure/Explosion	1.07%	0.10%
300 - Rescue/EMS	57.10%	64.80%
400 - Hazardous Condition	7.24%	3.40%
500 - Service Calls	2.41%	7.40%
600 - Good Intent Calls	6.43%	11.30%
700 - False Alarms/False Calls	1.61%	8.20%
800 - Severe Weather	0.80%	0.20%
900 - Special Incidents	0.27%	0.80%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%

The Rural area has a higher percentage of fires that does the rest of the nation (19.26%) and a lower percentage of EMS calls. The higher percentage of fires deserves further inquiry by the consultants.

Structure Fires

The consultants took a closer look at structure fires for both the City and the Rural areas. The National Fire Incident Reporting System has sub-categories that permit a fire chief to better understand actual fires in buildings as compared to cooking fires that have been extinguished prior to the arrival of the fire department or chimney fires that were confined to the chimney flue. Looking at the data closer discloses the actual number of fires in buildings for the years 2019-2021. The following chart displays this information for the reader.

Chart 3: Comparison of City and Rural Structure Fires



The City of Mendota averaged five actual building fires per year for the selected time period while the Rural area averaged almost nine fires (8.7) per year. This situation is not unusual, excluding major metropolitan areas, rural areas do tend to have higher incident rates of fires.

Identifying Emergency Service Trends

When determining the Department's efficiency and/or addressing future resource needs, it is prudent to examine the historical occurrences of emergencies. The following factors are of significant importance to the Department when examining call data:

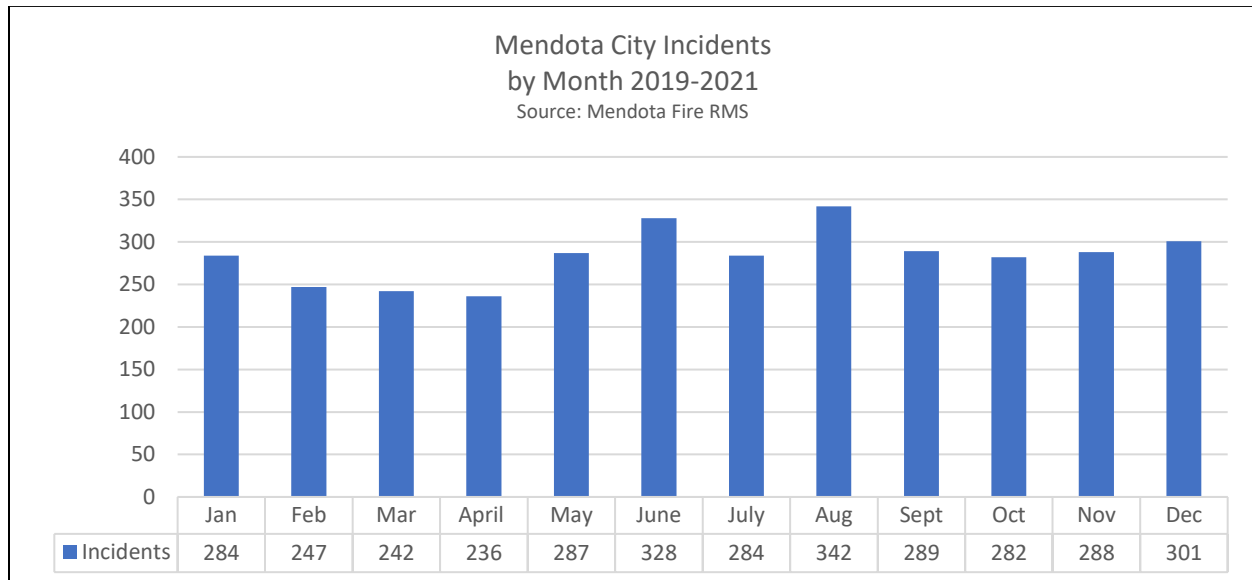
- Calls by month
- Calls by day of the week
- Calls by time of day
- Calls distributed by Station
- Simultaneous incidents
- Mutual aid/Automatic aid

Incidents by Month

Fire department leadership should be particularly interested in data which indicates when the department is at its busiest for month, day of the week, and time of day. When a significant pattern is discovered, it indicates the probability that emergency incidents will occur at a certain time and allows the department to anticipate staffing levels and make contingency plans for adequate personnel or other resources needed for emergency response. The following chart illustrates the calls by month for the years 2019-2021.

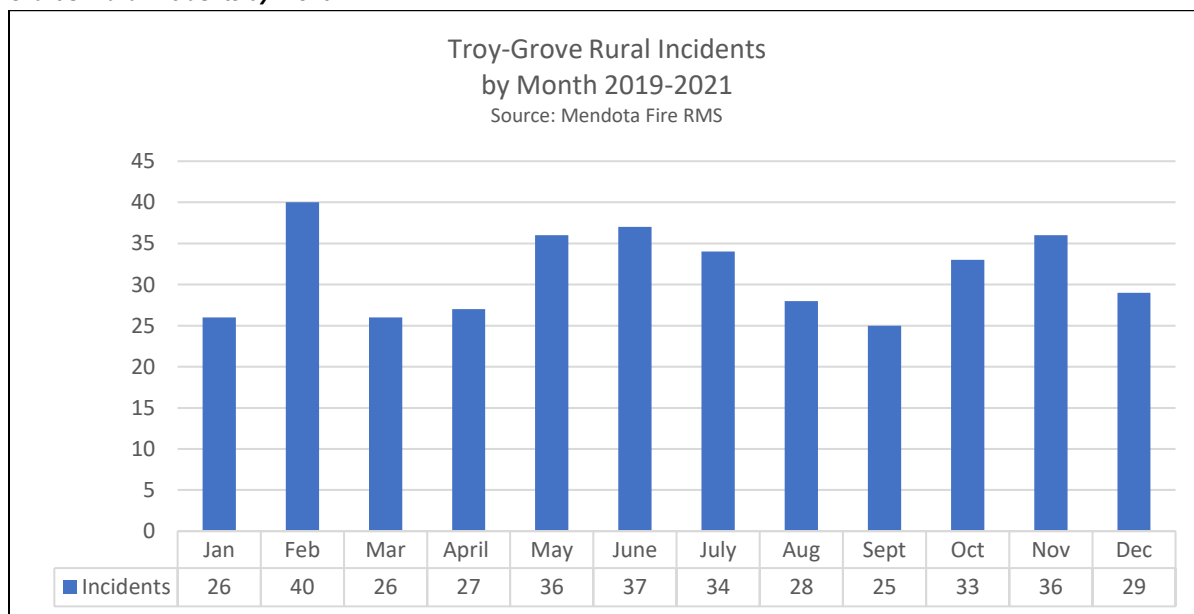
The following chart illustrates the number of incidents by month for the 2019-2021 for the City of Mendota. As the chart depicts the months of August, June, and December were the busiest months of the year.

Chart 4: City of Mendota Incidents by Month



Regarding the Rural area, the chart below depicts the number of incidents by month over the same time period.

Chart 5: Rural Incidents by Month

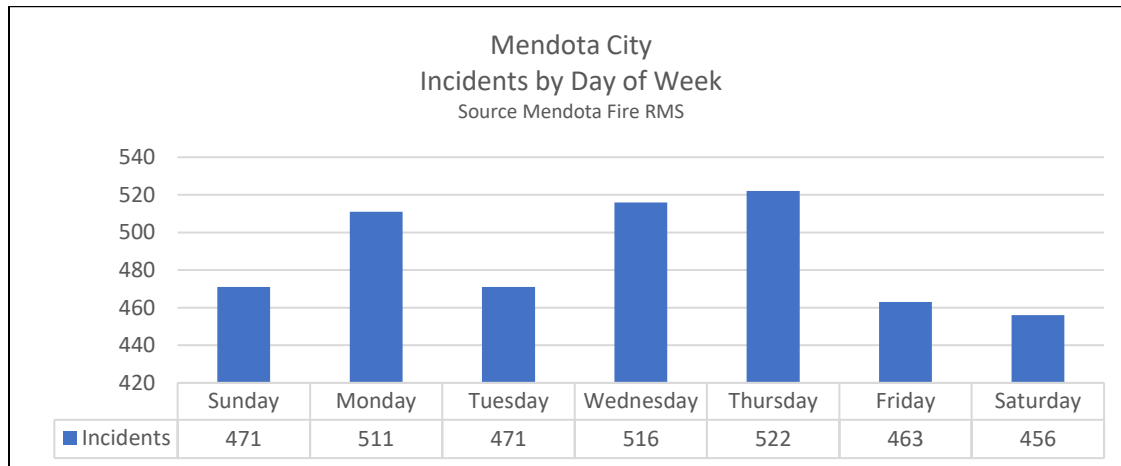


The busiest months for the Rural area are February, June, May, and November.

Incident by day of Week

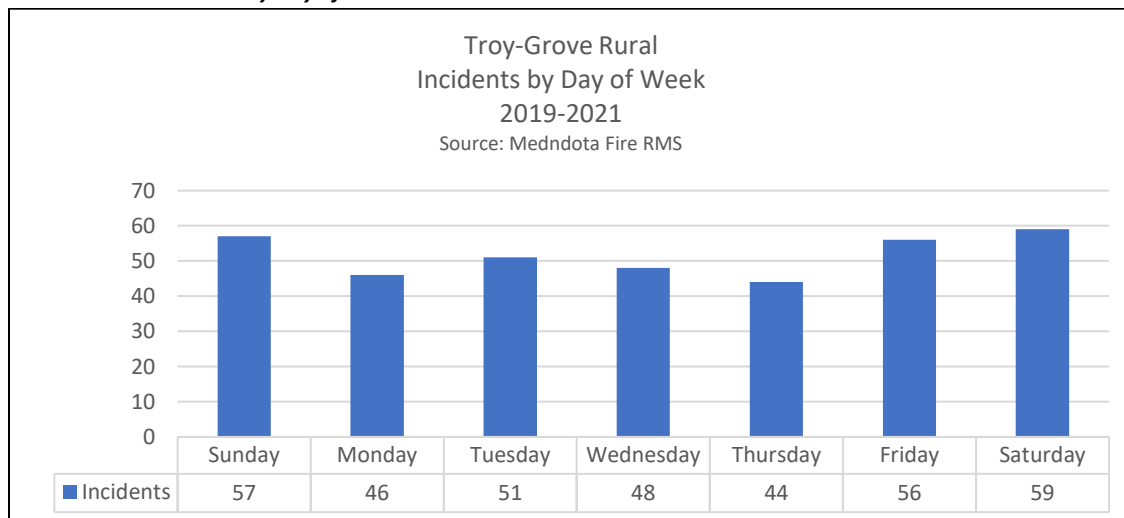
Incidents reviewed by day of the week is another metric utilized by effective leadership to manage the resources of the organization. Coupled with time of day and perhaps incidents by month, this information could be of value if a pattern emerges, suggesting staffing or resource deployment might change. The chart below illustrates average calls by day of the week.

Chart 6: City Incidents by Day of Week



The chart above demonstrates Thursdays, Wednesdays and Mondays are the busiest days of the week for the Mendota Fire Department in the City.

Chart 7: Rural Incidents by Day of Week



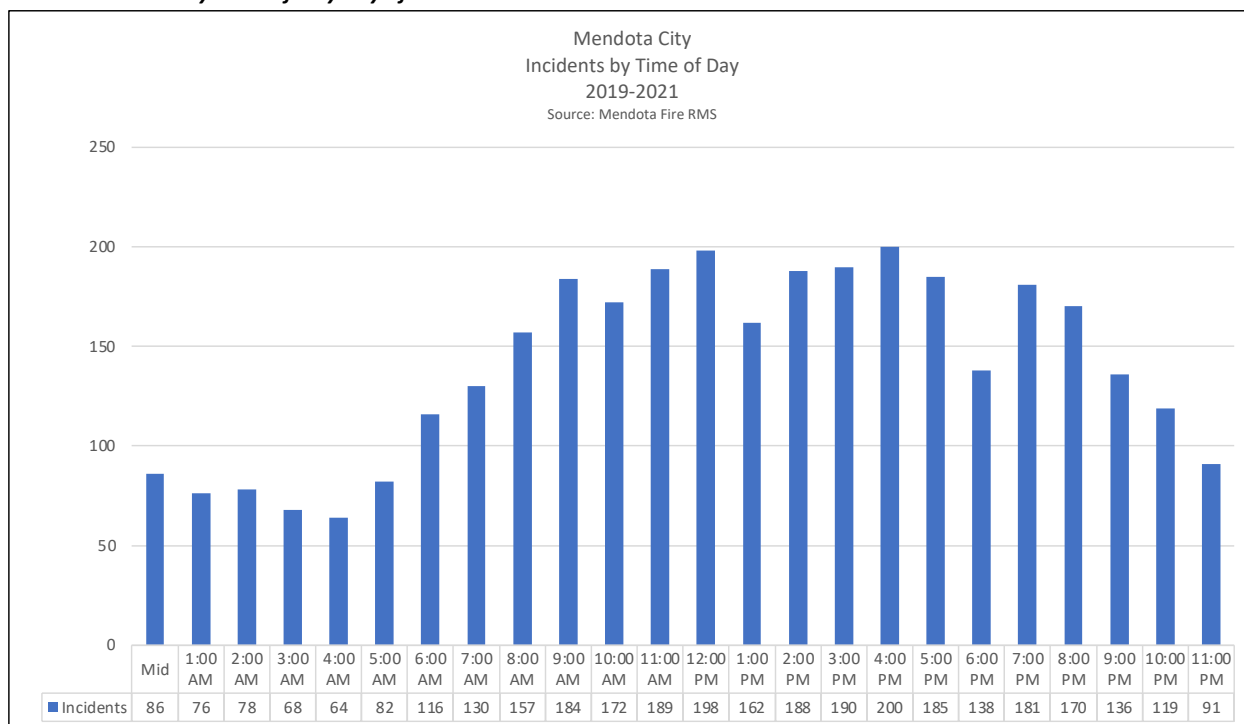
The data shows that Friday, Saturdays, and Sundays are the busiest days of the week for the Rural area.

Incidents by Time of Day

In most departments, incidents charted by time of day follow a pattern similar to a “bell curve.” The least busy time of day is from midnight to early morning, peaking in the mid to late afternoon and decreasing in the later evening hours. Although the least busy time of day is from mid-night to early morning, it is also when the highest number of civilian fire deaths occurs due to occupants sleeping. Those most at risk are the very young and old, who often are less able to escape and protect themselves. The chart below illustrates the average for the 3-year span of 2019 – 2021.

The chart below displays the incidents by time of day for the City of Mendota.

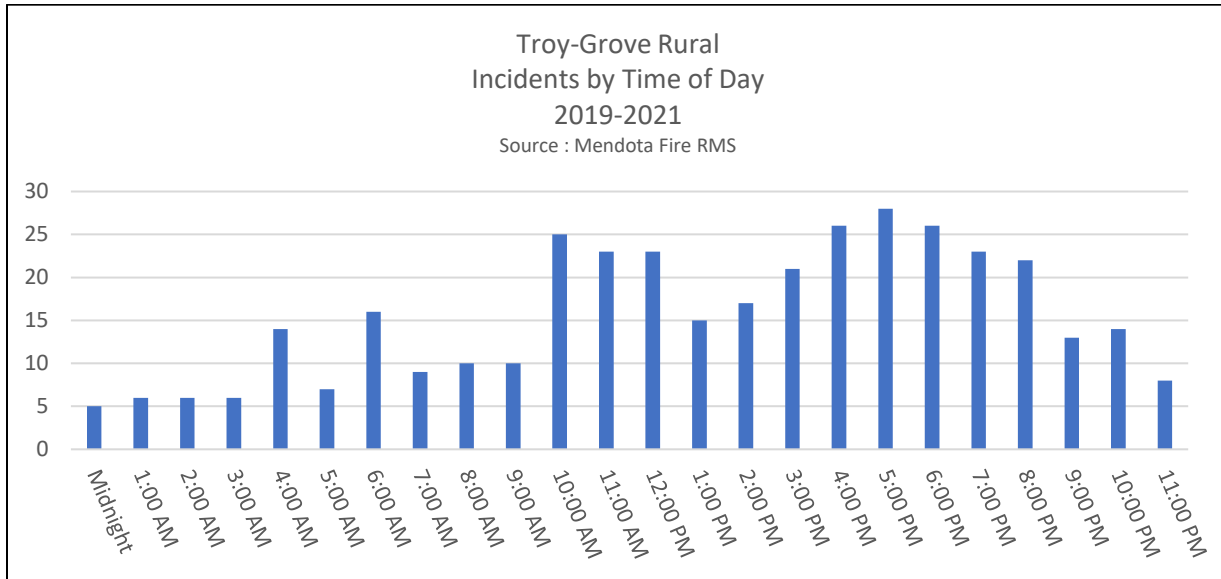
Chart 8: Incidents by Time-of-Day City of Mendota



The data shows that the peak demands for service in the City is from 8 am to 8 pm.

Regarding the Rural area, the peak demands for service are from 10 am to 8 pm as demonstrated in the chart below.

Chart 9: Incidents by Time of Day - Rural

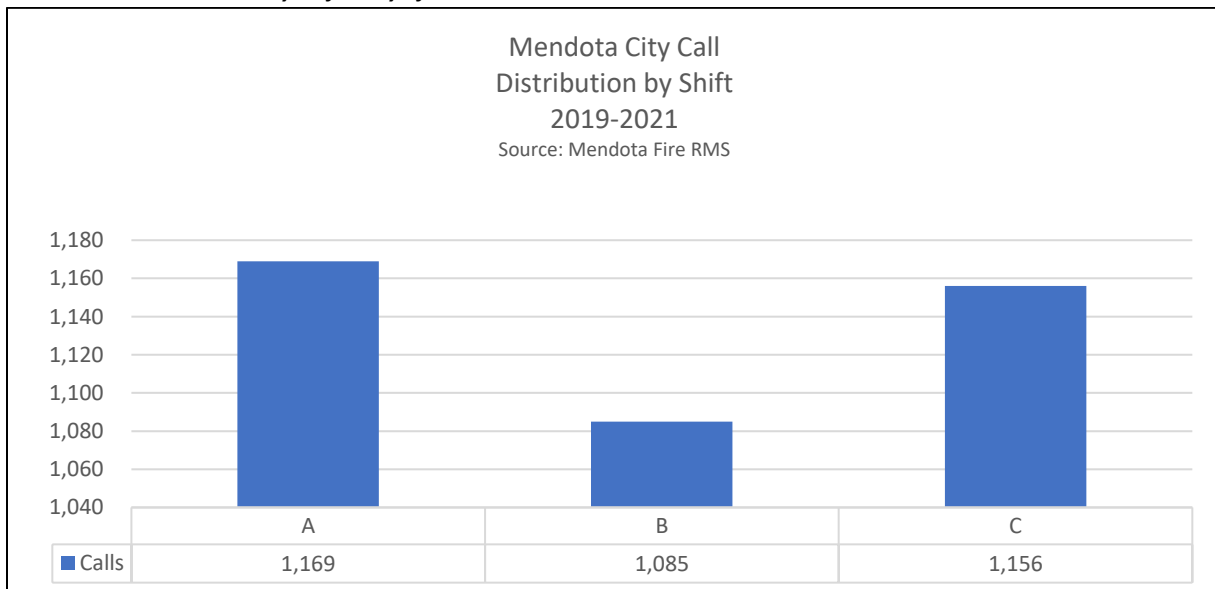


Call Distribution by Shift

Another metric for looking at the Department's data is the distribution of calls by shift. The Department works a "Chicago Shift Schedule" which means that employees work a 24 hours shift followed by 48 hours off.

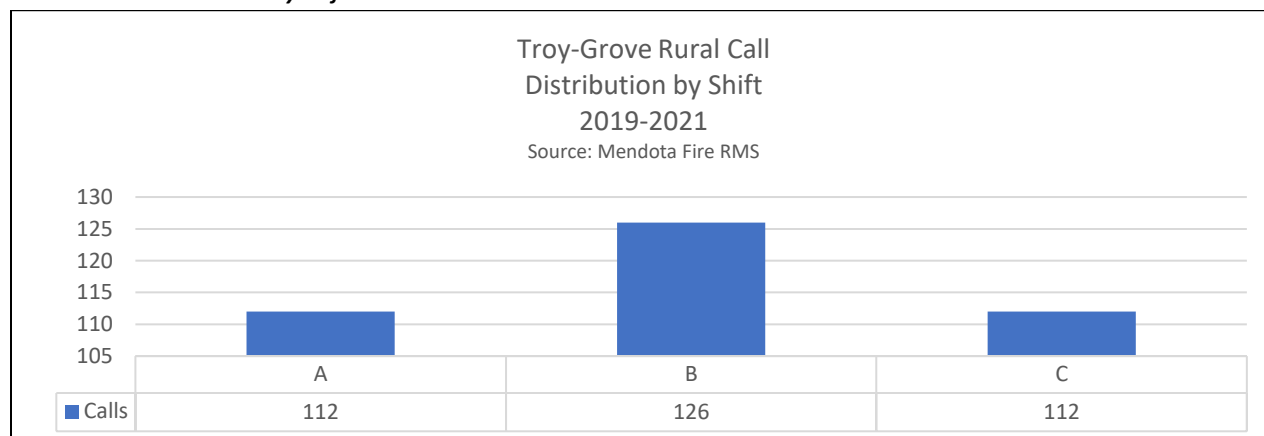
The Chart below demonstrates the calls by Shift for the years 2019-2021 that occurred in the City of Mendota.

Chart 10: Call Distribution by Shift - City of Mendota



Regarding incidents that occur in the Rural area the following chart displays this data as well.

Chart 11: Call Distribution by Shift - Rural



Simultaneous/Overlapping Incidents

The collection and review of data regarding overlapping calls is advantageous to fire department leadership in determining resource deployment, staffing, budgeting, and planning. The term ‘overlapping incident’ is a term utilized by Emergency Reporting® that refers to times when the department is handling an emergency situation while another unrelated emergency incident occurs, requiring immediate department response.

Fire departments do not have the ability to ‘stack calls’ as do police agencies who routinely prioritize calls and dispatch accordingly. With few exceptions, when 9-1-1 requests the Fire Department it is for an emergency – at least in the opinion of the caller.

If every piece of Fire or EMS apparatus were available at its assigned location every time a call for service was received, the Department’s reliability would be 100%. If, however, a call is received for a particular station/unit, but that station/unit is already committed to another incident, the next closest unit must respond from a different station or source. In this case, the substitute company may exceed the maximum prescribed response time. As the number of emergency calls per day increase, the probability increases that the primary unit needed for response is already committed and a backup or mutual aid unit will need to be dispatched.

The significance of the amount and frequency of simultaneous incidents can result in increased response times or greater usage of mutual aid. There is no consensus in the industry as to an exact number when simultaneous incidents require additional resources. The Consultants have found that in most studies when simultaneous incidents reach between 18% - 20% of total incidents, greater emphasis must be placed on additional staffing.

Regarding overlapping calls for the Mendota Fire Department, the table below identifies the number and percentage of overlapping calls for both the City and the Rural area for the Department.

Table 14: Overlapping Calls City and Rural

Year	2019	2020	2021	Totals
Total Calls	1,223	1,210	1,349	3,782
Overlapping City	82	114	101	297
Overlapping Rural	5	2	11	18
Totals	87	116	112	315
Percentage	7.11%	9.59%	8.30%	8.33%

Based on the incident data the Mendota Fire Department does not have a significant concern regarding overlapping calls.

Mutual Aid/Automatic Aid

In some studies, the Consultants have found that governing officials believe requesting assistance from other service providers on a routine basis will preclude them from having to add additional personnel, pay overtime, or provide more apparatus. This thinking is greatly flawed as the foundation of mutual and automatic aid is the reciprocity of services. Generally mutual aid and automatic aid are not used as a supplement for inadequate fire department staffing in communities.

Mutual Aid: The philosophical concept is to offer assistance to a fire department upon a request made by a host district. The sole purpose is to give or receive assistance when all available resources—equipment or personnel—are depleted, and then on a limited basis. Generally, mutual aid is drawn upon during an emergency incident where a particular or specialized need arises on a small to medium-size incident that would not be expected as a lengthy or long-term incident.

Automatic Aid: Differs from mutual aid in that it is a pre-determined agreement with another department to respond automatically when the host department receives a reported emergency or an alarm at a given location or area. This type of aid is utilized on a regular basis to supplement the host agency's initial response to the emergency with pre-determined apparatus, manpower, and chief officers, and is done so automatically.

The Mendota Fire Department participates in the Illinois statewide Mutual Aid Box Alarm system (MABAS). MABAS is a statewide, non-discriminatory mutual aid response system for fire, EMS, and specialized incident operational teams. Additionally, MABAS has been identified as a “best practice” by the Department of Homeland Security and MABAS has been adopted in numerous other states including Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. MABAS has one written document outlines mutual aid for approximately 1,175 communities rather than each community developing their own mutual aid

agreement with other communities. MABAS is a very effective and efficient mutual aid system and benefits the City of Mendota greatly. There are currently 69 geographic based MABAS divisions throughout Illinois and Mendota is part of Division 25. Through MABAS the Mendota Fire Department has approximately 25 different fire departments that could provide mutual aid, at no cost, to the City of Mendota if needed.

The concept behind MABAS is a fire department develops an alarm card, which will indicate what apparatus/equipment and/or personnel they are requesting, who they are requesting it from, and what level (how much/many resources) is desired prior to the actual emergency. The MABAS cards are designed to cover a generic situation and/or area of response district. Different cards are designed for situations such as tender box (requiring large amounts of water to be trucked in), mass casualty box, confined space box, hazardous material box, grass/brush fire box, etc.

The City of Mendota also has an automatic aid agreement with the Troy Grove Fire Protection District. The Troy Grove Fire Protection District automatically responds to the City of Mendota for all building fires.

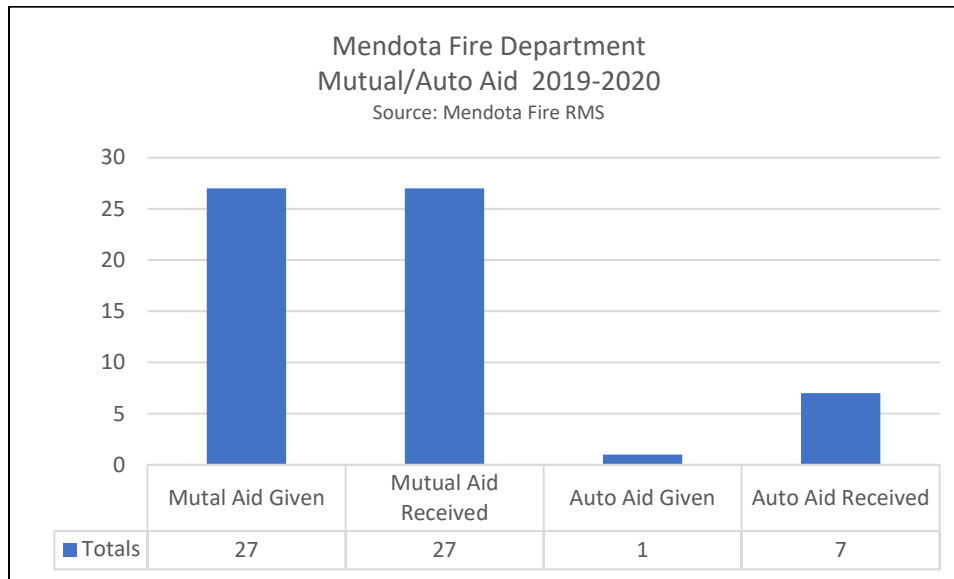
The following table summarizes the breakdown of automatic and mutual aid responses for the Mendota Fire Department from 2019-2021.

Table 15: Mendota Fire Mutual/Automatic Aid

	2019	2020	2021	Totals	Percentage
Mutual Aid Given	2	13	11	26	41.94%
Mutual Aid Received	5	1	22	28	45.16%
Auto Aid Given	0	1	0	1	1.61%
Auto Aid Received	1	3	3	7	11.29%
Totals	8	18	36	62	100.00%

The following chart helps the reader visualize the summary for automatic and mutual aid over the same time period.

Chart 12: Mutual/Automatic Aid 2019-2021



The following chart provides the breakdown of mutual and automatic aid by community for the years 2019-2021.

Table 16: Mutual/Auto Aid by Community 2019-2021

Community	MA Given	MA Received	Auto Given	Auto Received	Totals
Amboy Fire	1	1	0	0	2
Earlville EMS	1	4	0	0	5
Earlville Fire	3	0	0	0	3
La Moille Fire	7	0	0	0	7
LaSalle Fire	1	2	0	0	3
Oglesby Fire	1	1	0	0	2
Paw Paw Fire	3	1	0	0	4
Peru EMS	2	2	0	0	4
Peru Fire	1	3	0	0	4
Princeton Fire	1	0	0	0	1
Sublette Fire	5	2	0	0	7
Troy Grove	0	9	1	7	17
Utica Fire	1	2	0	0	3
Totals	27	27	1	7	62

As the above data discloses that the mutual aid and mutual aid received is exactly equal for the City of Mendota. This is the manner in which mutual aid was designed and envisioned for communities to enter into agreements for these services.

The Mendota Fire Department provided the most mutual aid to the Troy Grove Fire Protection District and provided the least amount of aid to the Princeton Fire Department. Troy Grove Fire Protection District provided the most assistance to the Mendota Fire Department while the Earlville, La Moille, and Princeton Fire Departments provided the least amount of assistance to the Mendota Fire Department.

Response Times

The issue of response times can be somewhat confusing to the general public. Most people believe it is the time it takes for the fire department to arrive on the scene of an emergency. This is only partially true. From start to finish, response time is a series of events that, when combined, define the period of time from when the caller dials 911 until the fire department places water on the fire or begins medical treatment on a patient. This is the true definition of response and takes the combined effort of dispatchers and firefighters to keep this time as short as possible for the benefit of the public.

Component of Response Times

1. **Detection Time:** The time it takes to detect the emergency incident and dial 9-1-1.
2. **Notification Time (Call Processing Time):** The time from when the call is received by dispatch to when the department is notified.
3. **Turnout Time:** The time it takes personnel to prepare and leave quarters after notification.
4. **Travel Time:** The time the first fire apparatus leaves the station to the time it reports on the scene.
5. **Mitigation Time:** The time the first apparatus arrives at the scene to when actual extinguishing/treatment efforts begin.

Detection Time: is not controlled by the PSAP or fire department.

Notification Time: is completely controlled by the PSAP (see PSAP section for details).

Typically, the consultants would provide data concerning turnout time concerning; however, this data is not available in the Mendota fire records management system. The Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch Center does not report this data as part of their computer assisted dispatch software. The same can be said for mitigation time as well. Call processing times will be discussed in the PSAP section.

Under the provisions for NFPA 1720, travel time for urban areas with a population of >1,000 persons per square mile is nine minutes 90% of the time. The following table displays the response time data for the Mendota Fire Department for responses to incidents in the City.

Under the provisions of NFPA 1720, travel times for rural areas with a population of <500 persons per square miles is 14 minutes 80% of the time.

Chart 13: Mendota Rural Average Travel Time to Incidents

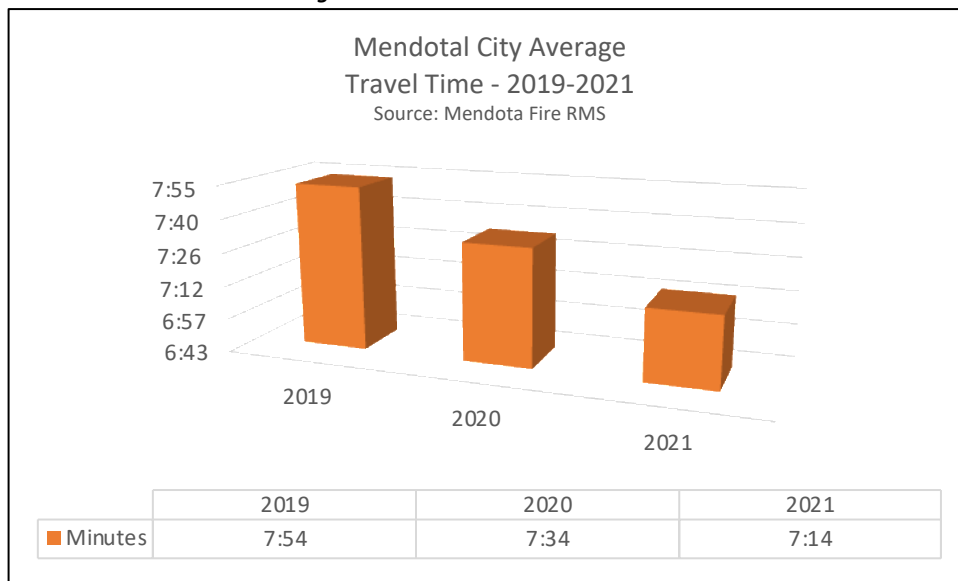
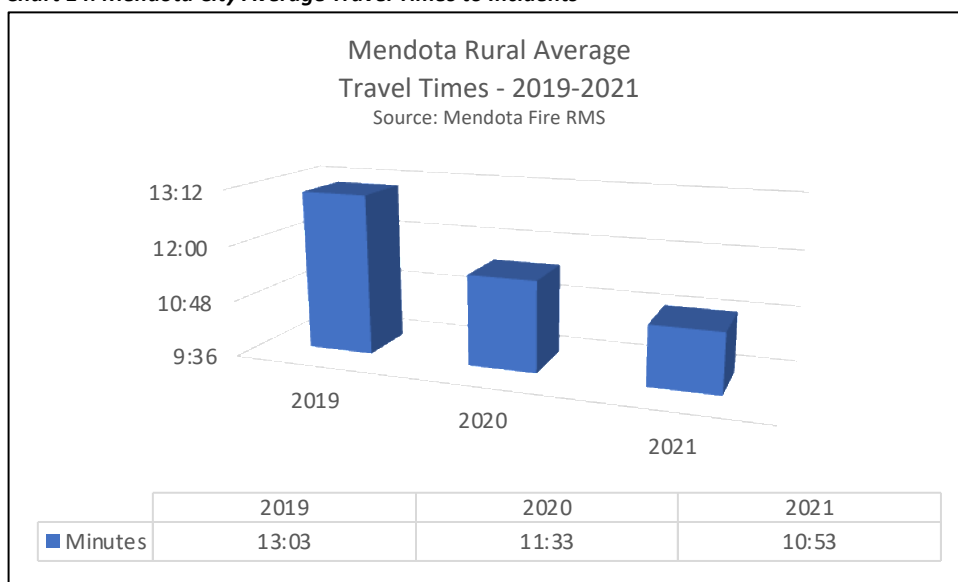


Chart 14: Mendota City Average Travel Times to Incidents



Regarding compliance with NFPA 1720, the City of Mendota average a travel time of seven minutes and thirty-four seconds for the years 2019-2021, thus meeting the standard.

Considering compliance for rural areas the Mendota Fire Department meets the requirements regarding response times with an average travel time of eleven minutes and forty-nine seconds.

Regarding travel times in the City of Mendota the overall average travel time improved from 7:54 to 7:14 a decrease of 40 seconds or approximately 8.4% from 2019 to 2021. The same trend was found in with the average travel times of the Mendota Fire Department responding to incidents in Troy Grove Mendota

Rural Fire Protection District. The average travel time was reduced by one minute and ten seconds or 16.6%.

Time Duration of Calls

The consultants looked at the average length of times that the Department spends on the scenes of emergencies. The following two table displays the average time spent on emergencies for the years 2019-2021. It should be noted that the data for the City of Mendota is not correct for the year 2020 (11 hours, 15 minutes, and 40 seconds). The consultants looked closely at the data and there is a computation error in the software program for that year. Based on the review of the data it appears that the average time on scene for 2020 and average time for all three years is consistent with the years of 2019 and 2021 for the City.

Table 17: Average Time On-scene for All Incidents City of Mendota

Mendota City Responses			
2019	2020	2021	Average
0:43:35	11:15:40	0:43:53	4:14:23

Table 18: Average Time On-scene for Rural Calls

Mendota Rural Responses			
2019	2020	2021	Average
1:05:50	1:17:31	1:14:31	1:12:37

In summary, the Mendota Fire Department's data meets the criteria for good data as defined by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. The Department would benefit greatly from a data quality assurance program whereby selected records are pulled at random and are reviewed for all data elements and that the data is coded according to the data standards. This program should include all electronic records that the Department maintain including but not limited to incident records, inventory, training, inspection, and maintenance records. Additionally, all personnel should receive yearly training on data entry for all electronic records.

The Mayor and City Council need to discuss with the Fire Chief to determine what data they would like to see on a monthly basis in order to have proper oversight over the Department. This data will assist both the Council and Department in evaluating existing policies as well as the implementation of new policies or programs. This data should be incorporated into the budget and goal setting process for the Council and the Fire Department.

Unfortunately, the Fire Department does not use any of its data to manage the day-to-day operations of the Department. It also does not use its data for short term and/or long-term planning for the Department's future operations.

Recommendation – Fire Department Data

- *The Department would benefit from a data quality assurance program to maintain data integrity. **Priority 3.***
- *All Department personnel should be trained in data entry requirements for all records that the Department maintains. **Priority 3.***
- *The Department must use its data to management the day-to-day operations of the Department as well as planning for its short term and long-term service delivery. **Priority 2.***
- *The Mayor and City Council should discuss with the Fire Chief the data it finds useful, and the Fire Chief should provide monthly reports to the Mayor and Common Council. **Priority 3.***
- *The Department and the City need to find a successor program for the Department's records management program which will be discontinued at the end of 2022. This program must interface with VALCOM's CAD computer. The RMS must interface directly with IVRD CAD program. **Priority 1.***

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP; AKA Dispatch)

In 2015, the Illinois General Assembly adopted Public Act 99-0006 which amended the Emergency Telephone System Act [(50 ILCS 750 & 50 ILCS 751/27) (911 landlines and 911 cellular)]; the intent was in preparation for a statewide conversion to a “Next Generation” 911 system. The goals of this legislation included:

- *reducing the number of transfers of a 911 call;*
- *reducing the infrastructure required to adequately provide 911 network services;*
- *promoting cost savings from resource sharing among 911 systems;*
- *facilitating interoperability and resiliency for the receipt of 911 calls;*
- *reducing the number of 911 systems or reducing the number of PSAPs within a 911 system;*
- *cost savings resulting from 911 system consolidation; and*
- *expanding 911 service coverage as a result of 911 system consolidation including to areas without 911 service.*

A primary dispatch center is defined as:

A primary PSAP is defined as a PSAP to which 911 calls are routed directly from the 911 Control Office, such as, a selective router or 911 tandem. Primary or secondary, which refers to the order in which calls are directed for answering. Primary PSAPs receive 911 calls first and immediately processes and dispatches appropriate resources.

As such, Cities of La Salle, Peru, Oglesby, and Mendota consolidated their dispatch centers in 2016 and created the Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch Center (IVRD), commonly referred to ValCom. The IVRD Center is located in the former Peru Police Department at 1503 4th Street in Peru, IL. The City of Mendota contributes approximately \$12,000.00 per month to help support ValCom’s operations. It should be noted that the terms PSAP, dispatch, IVRD, and ValCom can be used interchangeably throughout this section and report.

IVRD is governed by a 16-member board of directors that is comprised of four members from each community, the board has a chairman and vice chairman. The executive director reports to the chairman of the board as well as the other board members.

There are also three associate communities that are dispatched by ValCom which are the Village of Utica for fire dispatch, City of Spring Valley for fire and police dispatch, and the village of Earlville for fire dispatch.

The following table lists the various communities and departments that are dispatched by IVRD.

Table 19: IVRD Dispatch Clients

Police	Fire	Ambulance
LaSalle	LaSalle	LaSalle Fire Department
Peru	Peru	Peru Ambulance Service
Oglesby	Oglesby	Oglesby Ambulance Service
Mendota	Utica	Utica Fire Department
Spring Valley	Mendota	Mendota Fire Department
Earlville	Spring Valley	Earlville Fire Department
Leland	Troy Grove	
	Earlville	

Source: Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch

There are three other dispatch centers that include the La Salle County Sheriff's Department, City of Ottawa, and the Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch Center. If for some reason IVRD personnel could not answer 911 lines, the calls would be automatically forwarded (rolled over) to the Ottawa Dispatch center. Should the Ottawa Dispatch center not be able to answer the calls, the calls would be automatically routed to the La Salle County Sheriff's Department. The Ottawa Dispatch center is responsible for dispatching the Mutual Aid Box Alarm (MABAS) system for the region. IVRD has the capability of received 911 calls via text message from AT&T customers and IVRD is in the process of petitioning the other major cell phone providers to perform 911 texts at this time.

All 911 calls from the communities go to IVRD while 911 calls from the rural areas go to LaSalle County Sheriff's Office and are transferred to IVRD. All cellular 911 calls go to LaSalle County and transferred to IVRD.

At the time of this report IVRD is now undergoing a complete remodel of their building to make it strictly a dispatch center and the cost of the remodel is approximately \$1,500,000.00.

PSAP Staffing

ValCom is managed by an executive director who was recently hired January 31, 2022. The director is very knowledgeable in dispatch operations and has indicated his immediate goals of creating a vision, values, and mission statement for the organization. He also has plans to implement performance standards for dispatch personnel as well as creating dispatch supervisors.

ValCom currently employs 16 dispatchers who work 12-hour shifts. The shifts are from 6 am until 6 pm, and 6 pm until 6 am. At the present time there are no dispatcher supervisors. The dispatchers are represented by the Metropolitan Alliance of Police, Chapter 609. The table below illustrates the work schedule for dispatchers.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)

ValCom uses Village Police CAD by Brownlee which is primarily a police dispatch software and has very little, if any, application for fire and EMS organizations as well as data reporting capabilities. The Village Police Computer Assisted Dispatch software does not have the capabilities to interface with fire and EMS department's records management systems, record call answering data, call processing, turnout, and response time data for fire and EMS agencies. Without these capabilities ValCom cannot comply with the provisions of the National Fire Protection Association's standard 1221, Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems. The executive director understands these, and other, limitations and will be addressing them at some point in the future.

ANI / ALI

When 911 is dialed two displays appear on the CAD screen:

- Automatic Number Identification (ANI): the phone number from where the call was originated appears in the PSAP.
- Automatic Location Identification (ALI): is the location detail (address along with any detail like building name, suite number, floor, of room etc.) associated with the ANI from the database where the PSAP is connected.

In the case of the IRVD the ANI/ALI information is automatically transferred to the CAD system.

Cellular Phase Communications

With the proliferation of cellular phone users, phase II service allows PSAPs to identify the phone number of the cell phone used and the estimated location of where the phone was used. Cellular Phase II works similar to the ANI/ALI information for hardwired telephone lines.

Phase II service requires wireless carriers provide Automatic Location Identification (ALI) information to the PSAP centers. The accuracy requirements for this service are 50 meters (164 feet) for 67% of calls and 150 meters (492 feet) for 95% of calls with hand-based solutions, or 100 meters (328 feet) for 67% of calls and 300 meters (984 feet) for 95% of calls with network-based solutions. Therefore, if a caller utilizing a cell phone dialed 9-1-1 and was unable to speak, the PSAP could trace the call to a location close to the cell phone.

At the time of this report the IVRD dispatch center does not have this capability; however, Phase II should be implemented as part of the next generation of 911 planned for the fall of 2022 or spring of 2023.

PSAP Standards

Dispatch standards for fire departments fall under the preview of NFPA 1221, Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems, 2019 edition. NFPA 1221 has the following performance standards for the dispatching of fire and EMS calls.

7.4 Operating Procedures

7.4.1 90% of events received on emergency lines shall be answered within 15 seconds, 95% of alarms shall be answered within 20 seconds.

7.4.2 Call processing time shall include the time from call answer to initial notification of the responding emergency response unit.

7.4.3 Emergency alarm processing for the highest prioritization level emergency events shall be completed within 60 seconds 90% of the time.

7.4.5 For medical calls where a patient is determined to be unconscious/unresponsive and not breathing, bystander CPR shall be confirmed, or telephone CPR shall be initiated by a telecommunicator qualified in emergency medical dispatch and continued until emergency responders arrive at the patient.

Annex A – Figure A.7.4.1(b)

Alarm Transfer shall be <30 seconds 90% of the time (shown in figure above A.7.4.1(b)).

At the time of this report IVRD does not have any dispatcher performance requirements (such as NFPA 1221); however, there are plans to implement the provisions of NFPA 1221 and performance standards through the IAED. The current Village Police CAD system does not have the capability to calculate the above performance requirements.

As previously stated, IRVD's Village Police CAD is not capable of reporting call processing, turnout time, or response time data. Therefore, the PSAP director, Mendota Fire Department, or other fire and ambulance departments are not able to calculate these times.

Additional Benchmarks

Other important times should be recorded by the IVRD PSAP. Two important qualitative measures for fire departments are when water is applied to the fire during a structure fire and when the fire department begins medical care on patients during medical calls. These times are typically referred to as water on the fire and patient side times. These two times can provide great insight to fire departments to improve the quality of fire and medical services to their residents. These times reflect the efficiency of training fire department personnel receive in accomplishing the necessary tasks of preparing to deploy equipment and personnel to extinguish fires.

Patient side times also address the factors in accessing patients regarding searches, extrication, and other challenging rescue situations. This time is very useful to emergency department physicians to evaluate patient care, such as in cold water drownings and prolonged rescue from vehicles and equipment. Dispatch personnel can only record these times when informed by fire department command personnel. Most CAD systems have the capability of incorporating these times into their programs. In discussions with the executive director, he believes both these times can be added and tracked using the Village Police CAD system; however, he will need to consult with the Brownlee, Inc to be sure.

Training

All IRVD dispatchers are certified as Emergency Medical (EMD), Fire, and Law Enforcement Dispatchers. Only EMD is required by the State of Illinois and dispatchers are required to obtain 24 hours of continuing education over a two-year period. IVRD has the PowerPhone system for emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement dispatching system; however, they are not using the program at this time. IVRD personnel will be pursuing International Academy of Emergency Dispatch EMD program shortly. As part of this transition dispatcher will be certified through International Academy of Emergency Dispatching. According to the executive director the IRVD will be pursuing international accreditation through the IAED.

Continuing education hours for fire and law enforcement are established through the current PowerPhone program to retain certification as fire and law enforcement dispatchers.

Dispatchers also required to complete course work concerning the incident command system, specifically ICS 100, 200, and 700 and the Illinois Law Enforcement Data System (LEADS).

IVRD Data

Very little data is available from the Village Police CAD computer concerning the Mendota Fire Department. Basically, the only information available is incident counts. The following incident data regarding the Mendota is displayed in the table below as reported by IVRD.

Table 20: Mendota Fire and EMS Incident Count

	Fire	EMS	Total
2021	524	993	1,517
2020	481	919	1,400
2019	508	933	1,441
Totals	1,513	2,845	4,358

Source: Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch

According to IVRD data the City of Mendota's calls make up approximately 15% of all fire and EMS calls that are dispatched by the IVRD.

Of some concern to the consultants is that this data does not match the incident data that the Mendota Fire Department has recorded through their records management system. The following table compares the data compiled by the IRVD and the Mendota Fire Department for fire and EMS calls.

Table 21: Incident Count Comparison IRVD and Mendota Fire

	IVRD	Mendota Fire	Difference
2021	1,517	1,356	161
2020	1,400	1,213	187
2019	1,441	1,223	218
Totals	4,358	3,792	566

Using the IRVD as the base, the reader can see that there is a significant difference in the incident counts as reported by the IRVD and the Mendota Fire Department. The difference may be the result of the programming of the Village Police CAD system as to how CAD views/counts the incidents of fire and EMS agencies; however, there should not be such a significant difference in incident counts.

The consultants have a number of recommendations for the dispatch center, and they are listed below.

Recommendation – Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch Center

- *The IRVD must have a computer aided dispatch software system that addresses the dispatch and data needs of the fire and EMS departments and has the following minimum components:*
 - *Provide for dispatching of fire and EMS departments and have the capability to interface with fire and EMS records management software programs. **Priority 1.***
 - *The CAD software system must have the capability to fulfill the reporting requirements of NFPA 1221 regarding call answering data, call processing data, fire and EMS turnout time data, and response time data. These reports should be generated and provided to fire and EMS departments for review. **Priority 1.***
 - *Capability to track individual fire and EMS units and record various times associated with these units. **Priority 1.***
 - *The CAD software system must have the capability of capturing additional data elements such as patient side times, and fire on water time. **Priority 1.***
- *The IRVD must incorporate a quality assurance program to ensure that the data that is captured is consistent with the data that local departments collect in terms of content and count. **Priority 2.***

Mendota Fire and Ambulance Staffing

The Mendota Fire Department is staffed by two firefighter/paramedics each and every day. The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief are also firefighter/paramedics who work a 24-hour shift, the same as a firefighter, and are counted in the daily staffing of the Department. The Department has six full-time positions that consist of the Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, and four firefighter/paramedics. The Department also employs approximately 15 paid on call firefighters; however, at the time of this report there are 12 paid on call firefighters on the roster.

The four full-time firefighter/paramedics are represented by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 4200.

The Department uses three (3) classification of employees to provide services to the Mendota and the Mendota Troy-Grove Fire Protection District. Full-time employees work the 24 hours shifts, part-time personnel are firefighter/paramedics that assist and fill in on vacancies that occur when the full-time personnel are off on vacation, sick leave, training, etc. Paid on call personnel are personnel who assist responding to the fire station, or emergency scenes in the case of EMS calls. Compensation rates for these employees are outlined in Ordinance No. 04-18-22.

Concerning residency requirements, full-time personnel must reside within a 17-mile radius of the City limits but must reside in La Salle County. Paid on call personnel must reside in the City of Mendota and there are no requirements for part-time personnel. There have been some exceptions made to paid-on-call to residing in the City limits. There are two on the roster who live just outside the City limits. Inconsistency is problematic, because there is now a different standard for different people of the same classification, which can put the City in a position to defend discrimination claims. Therefore, the City should evaluate its residency rules to ascertain if the current limits can be modified to a different residency range, which could allow for additional paid-on-call personnel who otherwise do not currently apply.

Work Schedule

The full-time members of the Mendota Fire Department work a 24/48 work scheduled sometimes referred to as the Chicago Schedule. The following table illustrates the work used in the Department. There are 2,880 hours per year in the 24/48 work schedule.

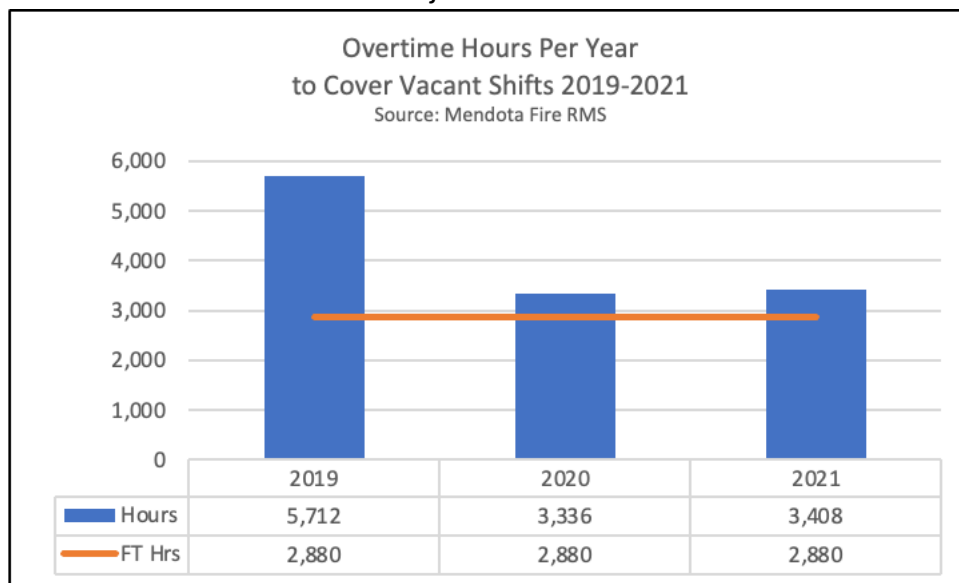
Table 22: Mendota FD Work Schedule

Hours	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
0700-0700									
0700-0700									
0700-0700									

Overtime

The consultants looked at the number of shift vacancies that were created by vacations, holidays, sickness, vacant positions, and other paid time off. The following chart illustrates the number of hours that were required just to fill the vacant 24-hours shifts from 2019-2021.

Chart 15: Overtime Hours to Fill Vacant Shifts



It is worthy to note that with the 24/48 work schedule there are approximately 2,880 hours for a full-time position. The City of Mendota paid in excess of one full-time position (represented as the orange line in the Chart) in overtime hours each of the last three fiscal years. The costs for this overtime will be understated because of the various roll-ups (workers' compensation, retirement, etc.) paid in addition to just overtime.

The mean, or average, number of overtime hours per year was 4,152 hours over the three-year period. This represents that each firefighter in the Department had to work approximately 692 hours outside of their normally scheduled hours just to cover vacant shifts. These numbers do not include overtime to cover less than 24 hours shifts. The overtime hours per full-time employee are not an efficient use of the Department's personnel and could result in burnout as well as safety concerns, so the City should limit the maximum consecutive hours of work allowed to no more than 48 consecutive hours. In addition, a look at sick and vacation time accrued and used was also completed.

Vacation and Sick Benefit

Because of the overtime hours, a review of sick and vacation for all full-time personnel was conducted. Between 2019-2021, the Department's average sick and vacation used was 1,054 hours, or roughly .5 FTE. Based on this, the City should further analyze what overtime was paid for benefited time off versus workers compensation, training, or a vacancy coverage.

Table 23: Department Sick and Vacation Time Taken

Calendar Year	Number Of Sick And Vacation Hours Taken
2019	1,019
2020	934
2021	1,209
Average Hours	1,054

As of June 2022, there is 6,284 hours of vacation and sick time on the books available for use, which is a significant amount. Vacation balances alone are at 1,416 hours. It was stated that time off, based on current staffing, is not occurring. Vacation is an employer provided paid time off benefit that allows employees to have uninterrupted time away from work and allow themselves the opportunity to recharge. For any position, regardless of if it is public safety, or not, there is importance to time away from work. Some of these reasons are as follows:

1. Improved productivity. When burnout starts, even the simplest of tasks becomes a challenge, and we lose some of our drive/motivation.
2. Better balance between work and personal life. When you are chronically overworked, you can start to lose your sense of self. Hobbies and interests fall to the wayside as you focus all of your energy on your career. Taking time away from work gives you a chance to revive what makes you happy.
3. Improved focus. No matter how much you love your job, doing the same thing day in and day out can wear on anyone. Taking time away gives you the chance to refocus on your goals and gain a fresh perspective.
4. Better relationships. While it is important to focus on your career, you also need to work on your relationships or the important people in your life will start feeling neglected and there is a high divorce rate among public safety.
5. Better health. Vacations work to reduce stress by removing people from the activities and environment that they associate with stress and anxiety. With the increase in awareness of suicide, mental health is a vital issue to a successful career in public safety.

When one adds the factors that fire/Ems providers respond to stressors most citizens do not experience, ensuring they have support and time away from work is even more critical. Allowing the paid time off benefit that has been earned should be a priority for the City.

With that said, analyzing the non-union sick and vacation benefit with the current Employee Manual was a challenge. It would appear there is a sick time limit currently imposed that is not consistent with the Employee Manual but is consistent with the collective bargaining agreement. It also appears the vacation cap from the Employee Manual is not being followed. In addition, there are such stringent restrictions on the use and timeframe to access this paid time that is counterproductive to the purpose for the benefit. Paid time off is often the second major benefit considered by applicants and the current workforce is looking for flexibility and work/life balance. The City is recommended to conduct a study of its paid time

benefits for non-union to ensure this benefit is market competitive. The City is also recommended to look at the current policies to ensure the City is following its written policy of accrual and maximum caps.

Recommendations – Fire and Ambulance Staffing

- *Fire Department leadership must ensure that no member works greater than 48 consecutive hours if called back to fill a vacancy. **Priority 1.***
- *The City should track overtime paid for time off, injuring, training, or vacancy. **Priority 3.***
- *The City should conduct a study of paid time to ensure its current benefit is market competitive and aligned with the current workforce demands. **Priority 2.***
- *The City should review the current policies in place for non-union personnel to ensure accruals and maximums are consistently followed. **Priority 2.***

Operations

Firefighters are dispatched by the Illinois Valley Regional Dispatch Center, referred to as Valcom, for all fire and emergency medical services calls. Full-time staff respond with the apparatus and paid on call staff respond to the station 1 to bring additional apparatus and/or additional firefighters to the scene or standby at the station in the event of another fire call. In the event of an EMS call, the ambulance responds immediately and the paid-on-call personnel who are trained as EMTs respond to the fire station and bring additional apparatus to assist the ambulance crew already on scene if needed.

To be a paid-on-call firefighter the individual must reside in the City of Mendota and is compensated at a rate as established by the Salary Ordinance No. 04-18-22 for emergency response.

Current Organizational Structure

The Department as currently structured has the following employment classes and authorized positions. The table below outlines the employment type and the authorized and filled positions by employment class.

Table 24: Authorized and Filled Positions MFD

	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
Full-Time	6	5	1
Part-Time	4	4	0
Paid-on-call	15	12	3
Totals	25	21	4

The structure, or organization of the Department, is rather unusual for the number of EMS calls that the Department responds to. The consultant's role is to look at the organization as a whole and the positions within the organization and align them best with the mission of the Department. In short, the consultants look at positions, not people, when making staffing recommendations.

Overall, the Department lacks focus or clarity in its purpose. There is a narrow vision that focuses solely on emergency response and overlooks various other factors in the protection of the community. One contributing factor towards the lack of focus is the organizational structure of the Department, and the second is the lack strategic vision or plan developed by the elected officials for departments.

The position of fire chief should be that of fire chief, not firefighter. The job of the fire chief is to have an overarching view of the community and the emergency services delivery system and maintain both in equilibrium. This cannot be accomplished when an inordinate amount of time is spent on response to EMS calls. The position of fire chief must be strategic, coordinate emergency response, fire prevention, public education, training, and administrative functions to maintain the organization moving forward in the community and in alignment with the vision and plan established by the Mayor and the Common Council.

Command Structure

In review of the Department's data, operations, strengths, and weakness the consultants see an important need to reorganize the Department by creating a fire chief's position that is based on a forty-hour work week rather than a 24/48 work schedule. Under the new structure the fire chief duties that should include, policy development, recruitment, training, and retention, fire prevention/inspection, pre-incident planning, paid-on-call recruitment, strategic plan development, apparatus/replacement schedules, executive development, and budget strategies.

This is an important first step in addressing the challenges that the Department faces. This position should be given clerical assistance for data entry, reports, and general administrative support; however, the consultants are not advocating a full-time position for these duties, however, these skills are required to maintain effective records and files of the Department and City. Further, creating a shift command position at the rank of Lieutenant, and eliminate the position of Assistant Fire Chief will provide for additional supervision on all shifts 24/7.

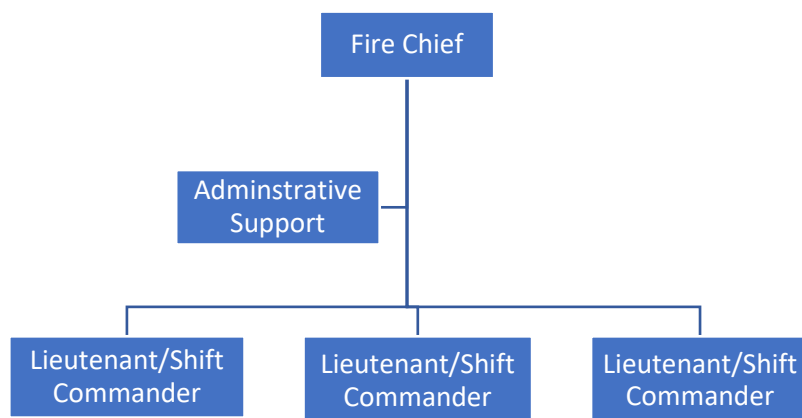
With the reorganization of the Department, it is further recommended that the position description for fire chief be reviewed and updated. For example, the consultants understand that the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency is no longer active and that some of the duties of this agency are being performed by the Police and Fire Chiefs. Careful consideration must be given to the revised duties and responsibilities of the position of fire chief's position after the position is converted to a forty-hour schedule. Many of the responsibilities for the position of fire chief are codified in the City's municipal code.

The second recommendation the consultants have is to eliminate the position of Assistant Chief. This position is redundant in an organization as small as the Mendota Fire Department. The consultants recommend that the position of lieutenant/shift commander be created (one per shift). This position would be responsible to coordinate the activities and, in the station, and on scenes of emergencies. In the event that the Fire Chief is out of town, one of the three lieutenants/shift commanders would be

designated in charge of the Department until the Fire Chief returns. He or she would remain on their respective shift; however, be responsible for the Department. The position of lieutenant should be a competitively tested position based on the necessary knowledge, skills, and essential functions of this position based on the FPC promotional processes.

The following figure would represent the new command structure of the Mendota Fire Department.

Figure 4: Proposed Command Organization Chart



Salary Calculations

The current wage of the Chief should be reviewed against the comparable market and aligned with other department directors at the City. The current wage paid to the Chief appears to be based on shift duties with additional compensation for administrative responsibilities. An Administrative Chief will likely meet Exempt Status under the Fair Labor Standards Act, so is not eligible for overtime. There are times a Chief works beyond 40 hours, including responding to calls for service on occasion. This is an expectation of the job. With that said, the City should address the loss of overtime that will occur for this change and consider a 3–5-year average of overtime to be included with the base rate to establish the salary going forward so the future salary is commensurate with historical salary.

The salary of the rank of Lieutenant should be reviewed against the comparable market.

Recommendations – Department Reorganization

- *Review all residency requirements for consistency between and within classifications. **Priority 1.***
- *The position of fire chief is recommended to be removed from the shift schedule and the position based on a forty-hour work week. This should be an exempt position with regard to overtime and be provided with clerical support. **Priority 1.***
- *The duties and responsibilities of the position of fire chief should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and appropriate changes made. This change should be made on conjunction with the preceding recommendation. **Priority 1.***

- *The City is recommended to conduct a market analysis of comparators to set the salary of the position of Fire Chief and Lieutenant. **Priority 2.***
- *The City is recommended to calculate a 3–5-year overtime average to add to the base salary so future salary is commensurate with historical salary. **Priority 2.***
- *Article IV of the Mendota Municipal Code should be eliminated and the duties that are relevant should be distributed among other appropriate positions throughout the City. **Priority 3.***
- *The City should eliminate the position of Assistant Chief. **Priority 2.***
- *It is recommended that the City create the position of lieutenant/shift commander (one per shift) and these positions report directly to the Fire Chief. This position would be responsible for the shift activities and emergency response. **Priority 2.***

Firefighter Staffing

The consultants looked at the staffing for various incidents, City and Rural, by incident type from 2019-2021. The two tables below illustrate the mean staffing by incident category.

Table 25: Average Staffing by Incident Category - City

Mean Staffing by Incident Type Mendota City				
Incident Type	2019	2020	2021	Mean FF
100 - Fire	5	5	4	4.7
200 - Over Pressure/Explosion	0	0	0	0.0
300 - Rescue/EMS	3	3	3	3.0
400 - Hazardous Condition	3	3	3	3.0
500 - Service Calls	3	3	3	3.0
600 - Good Intent Calls	3	3	3	3.0
700 - False Alarms/False Calls	3	3	3	3.0
800 - Severe Weather	3	7	9	6.3
900 - Special Incidents	1	5	4	3.3
Mean Totals	2.7	3.6	3.6	3.3

Table 26: Average staffing by Incident Category - Rural

Mean Staffing by Incident Type Mendota Rural				
Incident Type	2019	2020	2021	Mean FF
100 - Fire	9	8	8	8.3
200 - Over Pressure/Explosion	0	0	0	0.0
300 - Rescue/EMS	8	8	7	7.7
400 - Hazardous Condition	4	7	6	5.7
500 - Service Calls	7	9	6	7.3
600 - Good Intent Calls	6	7	6	6.3
700 - False Alarms/False Calls	7	7	6	6.7
800 - Severe Weather	14	6	0	6.7
900 - Special Incidents	0	0	2	0.7
Mean Totals	6.1	5.8	4.6	5.5

As the above tables indicate, the mean, or average, number of firefighters that responded for all incidents (2019-2021) is 3.3 for the City as compared to 5.5 for the Rural. Of particular note the number of firefighters to respond to fires in the Rural was 8.3 as compared to the City at 4.7, almost double that of the City. One question that can be asked is why is there such a difference between the mean, or average, number firefighters for fires different if the Rural responds automatically to fires in the City of Mendota? This number is understated for responses to the City of Mendota for several reasons. For calls to City of Mendota, the Mendota Fire Department is not recording the personnel who respond to the City in their records management so average number of firefighters is underreported. While the City has an automatic aid agreement with the Troy Grove Mendota Fire Protection District for fires, the District is called off for calls in the City that they should be responding to. The consultants understand that the agreement has been changed operationally, so that the Fire Protection District only responds to actual fires in the City. In both instances this reduces the average number of firefighters that are recorded by the Mendota Fire Department and thus skews the data by making the City of Mendota Fire Department having less staffing to alarms as is really the case. The average staffing in the City of Mendota is probably comparable to an average of eight firefighters similar to that of Rural responses.

Under the proposed restructuring of the Department, a rule of thumb is that it could take one additional member per shift to cover for every three firefighters on-duty. This would cover vacation, sick, and other reasons for shift absences. Therefore, if the Department has six firefighters in total, it will take a minimum of an additional two firefighters to cover for absences. Thus, the consultants are recommending the hiring of three firefighters. Based on the new structure of the Department the total staffing would rise from six full-time positions to ten positions; Fire Chief, three shift lieutenants, six firefighter/engineers.

While there will be an increase in the cost of full-time staff, there will reductions in overtime to help offset the increase in full-time salaries and benefits if properly managed. The consultants would recommend this Department reorganization and additional staffing regardless of if the City should decide to no longer provide services to the Fire Protection District.

Recommendations – Firefighter Staffing

- *The City should hire one additional firefighter per shift (3) bringing the total of the new structure of the Department to ten full-time positions. **Priority 2.***

Paid-on-Call Personnel

At the time of this report there are approximately 15 paid-on-call (POC) authorized positions of which the Department shows 12 POCs on their roster. Some POCs respond to just fire calls, some just EMS calls, and some both. There are approximately four POCs that can be counted on to respond to calls. Currently there are no minimum requirements for POCs in terms of calls or training hours to maintain their employment status with the City.

POCs that respond to only emergency medical calls must sign up for a 12-hour shift in advance; the shift is from 6 am to 6 pm and 6 pm to 6 am. EMS POCs are expected to respond to calls during their shifts. POCs that respond to fire, or fire and EMS calls are expected to respond to all calls for which they are available.

In reviewing response rates of POCs to alarms from 2019-201, the following table summarizes the response rates of all of the POCs. There were 48 total paid-on-call participants over the three-year period. During the three-year period 92% of the POCs responded to less than 5% of the Department's calls in the City of Mendota.

Table 27: Paid-on-Call Participation Rates

	5% or Less	More than 5%	Greater than 10%	Highest %
Number of POCs	37	7	4	17.2
% of POCs	77%	15%	8%	

The effectiveness of Mendota's paid-on-call program is very ineffective. The Department needs to invigorate the program and implement minimum response and training requirements and hold members accountable for their performance. Minimum participation rates should be developed with feedback of POCs and full-time personnel for training hours and responses. Consideration should be given to major life events and opportunities for POCs to take official leaves of absences for specific time periods to address family and professional obligations that arise from time to time. Also, POCs that do not achieve the minimum performance standards should be given the opportunity to achieve minimum performance requirements before separating them from the Department.

Length of Service Program

The Mendota Fire Department would benefit greatly from a Length of Service Program (LOSAP). A LOSAP program provides economic incentives for individuals to join and remain with a fire department. These programs are becoming more popular every year, and many of these programs have been enacted in numerous states to address the recruitment and retention of paid-on-call. A typical LOSAP program

provides members with a monthly annuity reward after serving a specific number of years with a fire department. There are many examples of LOSAP programs that are in use around the country, and these programs serve as an important recruitment and retention tool for cities like Mendota. Investing in a LOSAP is much more cost effective rather than having to hire additional career firefighters.

When sufficient numbers of POCs are recruited an on-call schedule should be developed (similar to a full-time work schedule) in order to provide POCs sufficient time for personal, family, community, and professional commitments without sacrificing their commitment to the Fire Department.

Recommendations – Paid-on-Call Program

- *The City Mendota should invest in the creation of a Length of Service Awards Program as a recruitment and retention tool for paid-on-call firefighters. **Priority 2.***
- *The Fire Chief, in conjunction with POCs and full-time personnel, should develop and implement minimum participation response and training requirement for all POCs. Included should be opportunities for POCs who do not meet minimum requirements the opportunity to meet the standards before being separated from the Department. **Priority 3.***

Human Resources

Recruitment

The department did not report any unusual challenges with recruitment simply because recruitment efforts in general for public safety throughout the United States is generally more challenging because there are less applicants overall, background concerns eliminate applicants, and a rigorous hiring process simply takes time.

Recruitment is a critical part to ensure proper staffing no matter the organization's size. It is the potential employee's first contact with the employer, so it is an employer's first opportunity to make a positive impression with the applicant. First impressions can influence decisions. The recruitment process should be easy to follow, transparent, and timely, ensuring applicants a positive experience; so even if not selected, they may be drawn to apply again in the future.

From an operational standpoint, recruitment should be occurring as quickly as possible, while maintaining legally required and best practice standards with the recruitment process. Often vacancies will result in overtime from remaining personnel to ensure the minimum staffing levels are met. This can be challenging on operational budgets. In addition, although overtime is expected in this line of work, ongoing overtime may exacerbate burnout, decrease job satisfaction, and demotivate employees. A department will run more efficiently, when at full staffing.

National Recruitment Trends

According to human resources and fire/EMS professionals across the United States, it is becoming progressively harder to hire qualified public safety personnel. Recruitment and retention of qualified personnel with the necessary skills for public service topped the list of workforce challenges (State and Local Government Workforce: 2020 Trends), and nearly 15% of government employers cite fire/EMS positions to be among the most difficult to fill. As a result, departments should approach recruitment as the first and most important step to providing the community with a stable and professional workforce.

Recruitment Strategy

The City of Mendota, nor cities of comparable size, cannot afford a full career staff of firefighters. Recruitment and retention of part-time and paid-on-call firefighters are as essential as full-time and should not be ignored. This could include a cadet program for high school students, explorer post through community groups, engagement of employers in the recruitment and retention of firefighters, and resources provided through other organizations such as the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). The NVFC is a nationally recognized organization representing volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters that offers numerous resources to address recruitment and retention. These opportunities can be looked at in greater detail based on the City's recruitment strategy.

A recruitment strategy is a plan of action devised to help an organization with its recruitment needs. A strategy is typically targeted and outline the strengths and benefits for working for the organization. It is more in depth than just identifying marketing sources. It considers all aspects of the hiring process to draw in the best candidates. The department does not have a recruitment strategy, they simply put out a traditional advertisement in the paper and online when they need to hire or establish their eligibility list. The Recruitment Strategy also needs to align with staffing – whether full time and/or paid-on-call. The department is recommended to develop a formal recruitment strategy that identifies recruitment sources, target populations, target locations, information on the department and the community to market etc. Successful recruitment is changing because traditional recruitment models are no longer effective. The city should be considering how the Mendota Fire Department can stand out as an employer of choice, and what can and should be showcased to draw applicants in. Areas of discussion should include:

- *Different strategies for full-time and paid-on-call.*
- *Diversity - Targeted recruitment and professional relationship development to align with the community it serves.*
- *Integrity – What should or should not disqualify a candidate, and balance that with Department credibility (see application/background packet later in this report)*
- *Service – Emphasis on the department as a community service provider, and the opportunity for employment gives back to the community served.*

Fire and Police Commission

Within the State of Illinois, the City follows Chapter 65 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes to provide power and authority to the Board of Fire and Police Commission (FPC). This FPC is made up of three members who do not hold any public position or office and are appointed by the mayor with approval by the City Council. This process was developed with the intent to have fair and impartial hiring and disciplinary processes. However, since the Civil Rights Act of 1991 in which the burden of proof for discrimination changed from the employee to the employer, and the introduction of a jury trial, as well as punitive and compensatory damages, an employer's human resources compliance landscape has significantly changed. Employers now have significant compliance standards/burden of proof, this allows for some flexibility within these processes, because compliance is now simply the law.

There are no qualifications to be a member of the BFPC other than they cannot hold a public office position and must have a demonstrated interest. This is not to say commission members are not qualified, only that there is not a high level of qualification threshold. As a result, the hiring processes may be conducted by individuals who have a desire, but do not necessarily have the human resources nor operational qualification needed to properly participate in the selection process of the position being filled. The City does not have a designed human resources professional on staff to attend commission meetings to ensure legal compliance with the interviewing process, but the Fire Chief is present.

In reviewing the BFPC Policy and Procedures, what is concerning is there is no formal participation written into the policy for the chief/designee to be included in the hiring process, such as interviewing with the commission. The concern is the potential disconnect between the qualities the Chief is looking for in a candidate as compared to what the commission is looking for in a candidate. The Chief did indicate he is

invited by the Commission to provide feedback, which is positive, but future Commissions may not approach feedback in the same manner.

The solution to this is twofold. First, the City should ensure all commission members secure training for this role from an operational and human resources perspective. Illinois has a Fire and Police Commission Association that provides training opportunities which can be explored. The City should develop a training module for interviewing techniques that include legal compliance, industry standards and best practices, ranking, documentation retention, etc. In addition, the Fire Department should introduce new commission members to the department by providing them access to certain operations. The dialogue between the Fire Chief and the FPC should also be ongoing in meetings to describe the department's human capital needs and the qualities that will align best with the values of the department. Obtaining the proper personnel allows the Chief to effectively carry out operations and strategic goals established by the City Council. In summary, the FPC plays a critical role in understanding the right candidate fit and finding those candidates through the current recruitment processes. Ensuring the FPC understands the department's needs will only strengthen the recruitment processes.

The second solution is to formally include the Fire Chief into the interview process so feedback from the department is considered and included in the outcomes. This would be ideal balance to have both citizen members and subject matter experts involved.

Application Document

The purpose of the employment application is to identify if the applicant meets or exceeds the minimum qualifications for the position. The city is also asking for information which should only be reserved for the background process. After review of the application, the following are adjustments recommended:

Table 28: Full Time Employment Application Analysis

Application Section	Description
2	Other names/aliases should be removed, as it is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City as risk for marital status or gender discrimination.
5	The application requests a social security number. Since the applications are still received traditionally via hardcopy, not via a secured software, along with the heightened concerns for identity theft, this identifying data is not usually requested at time of initial application and should be removed. This information can be requested in a separate document for the background, which is then removed from the application before it is submitted to the FPC to maximum protection.
7	Date of birth is a direct link to age and is not germane to the qualifications to the position. The City can seek this information in the background check process for verification purposes only. The City <u>can</u> ask if the applicants are between the age of 21-35 years of age, as a yes/no questions, as this is the state requirement. See item number 12.
8	Place of Birth is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for national origin discrimination.
9	Sex/Gender is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for gender discrimination.

10	Height is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for discrimination on the basis of gender or national origin.
11	Weight is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended.
12	The City <u>can</u> ask if the applicants are between the age of 21-35 years of age, as a yes/no questions, as this is the state requirement. This question should be reworded.
13-14	Hair color and Color of Eyes is not germane to the qualifications to the position. This puts the City at risk for discrimination on the basis of color, race, or national origin.
15	Because citizenship is not a requirement to be a firefighter, the City should modify this question to ask if the applicant is authorized to work in the United States. All other information will be provided by a new hire with the I-9 process verifying employment eligibility
16	Listing every family member who is still living is not germane to the qualifications to the position and is excessive. The City can seek this information in the background check process, although this is not necessary information for firefighter positions.
17-22	Marital status and other related information is not germane to the qualifications to the position. This puts the City at risk for marital status, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination.
23-26	Children and other related information is not germane to the qualifications to the position. This puts the City at risk for marital status, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination.
27	Asking for graduation dates puts the city at risk for age discrimination claims and should be removed. This information can be requested in the background process to confirm the applicant is between the ages of 21-35.
32	The application requests a driver's license. Since the applications are still received traditionally via hardcopy, not via a secured software, along with the heightened concerns for identity theft, this identifying data is not usually requested at time of initial application and should be removed. This information can be requested in a separate document for the background, that is then removed from the application before it is submitted to the FPC to maximum protection.
37	Listing addresses for the past ten years is not germane to the qualifications for the position and can be requested in the background packet.
38-39	Rental or homeowner status is not germane to the qualifications for the position.
41	The application requests a serial number (social security number). Since the applications are still received traditionally via hardcopy, not via a secured software, along with the heightened concerns for identity theft, this identifying data is not usually requested at time of initial application and should be removed. This information can be requested in a separate document for the background, that is then removed from the application before it is submitted to the FPC to maximum protection.
59-59A	Whether a person has been a victim of a crime is not germane to the qualifications to the position and is an excessive question.
72	Illinois' Employer Equal Pay Act prohibits employers from request salary history and should be removed.
75-78	An applicant's financial history is not germane to the qualifications to the position and is excessive. If the City were to desire a financial background check the City, although not recommended for this position, the City must follow the Fair Credit Reporting Act and all legal disclosures.
79	Acquaintances that are not employers nor references is not germane to the qualifications of the position and can be asked in the background packet, if the City feels this is relevant to a person's character.

	The Note and thumbprint should be removed from the application. This form is intended to be for collecting minimum qualifications, not background information.
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The City also has an authorization to release form for full-time applicants to complete to submit to other organizations for background information.

After review of the POC application, the following are adjustments recommended:

Table 29: Paid-on-call Employment Application Analysis

Application Section	Description
2	Other names/aliases should be removed, as it is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City as risk for marital status or gender discrimination.
5	The application requests a social security number. Since the applications are still received traditionally, not via a secured software, along with the heightened concerns for identity theft, this identifying data is not usually requested at time of initial application and should be removed. This information can be requested in a separate document for the background, that is then removed from the application before it is submitted to the FPC.
6	With whom the applicant lives is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for marital or sexual orientation discrimination.
7	Place of Birth is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City as risk for national origin discrimination.
8	Date of birth is a direct link to age and is not germane to the qualifications to the position. The City can seek this information in the background check process for verification purposes only. The city <u>can</u> ask if the applicants are between the age of 21-35 years of age, as this is the state requirement.
9 and 10	Hair color and Color of Eyes is not germane to the qualifications to the position. This puts the City at risk for discrimination on the basis of color, race, or national origin.
11	Scars, birthmarks, blemish, tattoo is not germane to the qualifications to the position and puts the City at risk for discrimination on the basis of religion or gender.
12	Because citizenship is not a requirement to be a firefighter, the City should modify this question to ask if the applicant is authorized to work in the United States.
13	Listing every family member who is still living is not germane to the qualifications to the position and is excessive. The City can seek this information in the background check process, although this is not necessary information for firefighter positions.
14	Drug use should be removed from the application and asked in the background packet only.
15	Alcohol use/habit should be removed. This is potentially protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended and puts the City at risk for discrimination.
16-19	Asking an applicant to disclose physical or mental conditions, among others, which may be relevant to their eligibility or fitness for the position, should be removed, as this will be addressed with a medical provider to determine fitness for duty under the protections of HIPAA during the pre-employment testing process, and is protected information, putting the City at risk for discrimination.
20	Asking for graduation dates puts the city at risk for age discrimination claims and should be removed. This information can be requested in the background process to confirm the applicant is between the ages of 21-35.

29	Listing addresses for the past ten years is not germane to the qualifications for the position and can be requested in the background packet.
	Emergency notification and disclosure of relationships to those emergency contacts should only be requested after hire, during the orientation process. This is not germane to the qualifications for the position and puts the City at risk for marital or sexual orientation discrimination.
	The question "Do you have the ability to maintain a high level of activity for a long period of time?" is a yes /no question. The City is advised to describe the physical nature of the job and only ask if the applicant can perform those duties. This question, however, is largely irrelevant, as pre-employment testing will test and validate this.

The POC authorization form attached to the POC application is generic in nature to the application. Because the City is not running a credit check or health check, those reference should be removed from the authorization form, or simply use the full-time authorization form for all positions.

The City has combined its application with background information, which puts the City at high risk for employment/ discrimination claims. The City should have a single employment application for both full time and paid-on-call, and a separate background packet which only asks questions relevant to a position in the Fire Department, so the applicant understands which information is being used for each process, and also understands the personal information sought is for background purposes, not establishing qualifications. This may require the City to develop a background packet. Given the legality in this area, it is recommended the City have the revised application and background packet reviewed for legal purposes before it is used.

Recruitment Process Opportunities

It was found the department is following the Policies and Procedures of the FPC for the interview process, which includes:

- BFPC panel application review
- Background check/investigation, conducted by the Mendota Police Department
- Written examination administered by C.O.P.S. and F.I.R.E. Personnel Testing Services
- BPFC panel interview
- Candidate Physical Agility Test (CPAT)
- Polygraph (post offer) coordinated by C.O.P.S. and F.I.R.E. Personnel Testing Services
- Psychological examination (post offer) coordinated by C.O.P.S. and F.I.R.E. Personnel Testing Services
- Physical and drug test (post offer) provided through the City's occupational health provider. It was not verified by the Consultants but is presumed the medical exam is conducted by an occupational health provider knowledgeable in NFPA 1582: Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments and OSHA 1910.134: Standard on Respiratory Protection.

Within these processes, the Fire Chief is the liaison between the Department and the FPC. The City should be commended for its process. An organization of this size does not always perform all the above listed functions. There are some opportunities for the City from these processes as follows:

Applicant Barriers

The current employment application is available hard copy. Applications are to either submitted directly to the Department/Chief, or via City Hall and routed to the Department. The City is recommended to develop an application document that can be placed on the City or Department website and completed and submitted to the City electronically.

The CPAT and Written Examination both have an associate fee, which is paid by the candidate. This fee is considered a barrier to employment, and those in facing economic struggles may not be able to afford these additional fees. A recruitment process should be fully accessible to everyone. The city should work with vendor to have this fee waived for the applicant, even if the city must pay the fee on applicants' behalf or create a reimbursement opportunity.

Applicant Communication

The Fire Chief is currently responsible for ensuring all applicants are notified of their status during the application process but is not always consistent. It is recommended all communication to applicants be generated via email so messages can be sent quickly, and copies retained. This would include communicating a change to the status of their application, if the applicant is not being considered for a posted position and/or will not be moving further in the hiring process after an interview, or even if their application is not being considered further as examples. This correspondence should be standardized so there is a consistent message being sent from the organization for each scenario. All correspondence should be retained based upon the organizations retention policy.

Recruitment Records Custodian

Currently recruitment documents are collected/maintained in the Fire Department, not with the City Clerk, who is the official records custodian and has all City personnel files. Recruitment records include the documents and actions taken for the hiring of each position such as job advertisements, resumes, employment applications, interview evaluations, reference checks, results of physical examinations, employment test results, applicant data for candidates not hired, and related information. These records must be maintained for candidates that are hired as well as those that are no hired. These records should be retained and held by the official records custodian for the City for proper retention/ destruction. These documents must be kept for 3 years after a no-hire decision has been made. Records generated for those who become employees must also be retained and should be included into the City's confidential personnel records.

Paid on Call Hiring Process

The paid-on-call hiring process is an abbreviated form of the full-time hiring process, outside the policies and procedures of the FPC, conducted by the Chief and Assistant Chief, which is acceptable practice in fire

service. The City is recommended for the Chief to follow objective standard practices for screening, maintain screening documentation, interview notations, formal communications, testing outcomes etc. for filing with the City Clerk's Office just as recommended for full-time positions. The City is recommended to review the Range of Motion test that is administered in-house to POC applicants to ensure this test is substantially related to the duties of the position, is valid, and is not a barrier to employment with the City.

Recommendations – Recruitment Practices

- *The Department should include the recruitment of paid-on-call personnel and full-time personnel into the City's recruitment strategy. **Priority 1.***
- *Ensure BFPC members are trained/educated on operational and human resources perspectives and understand the preferred qualities in applicants. **Priority 2***
- *Formally incorporate the Fire Chief into the BFPC interviewing processes to allow for the inclusion of subject matter experts. **Priority 2.***
- *Update the Full-time and Paid-on-Call employment applications and background documents as outlined in the report. **Priority 1.***
- *Consider removing applicant fees or provide for a reimbursement to eliminate this employment barrier. **Priority 2.***
- *Develop standardized written templates for applicant communications. **Priority 2***
- *Ensure all recruitment, interview, and testing records for full time and paid-on-call is provided to the City Clerk's Office, as the official records custodian for the City. This is to include all no-hires. **Priority 2.***
- *Review the Range of Motion test provided to paid-on-call candidates is substantially related to the duties of the position, is valid, and is not a barrier to employment with the City. **Priority 2***

Succession Planning

Succession planning is a process which identifies and develops internal personnel who have the potential to fill key leadership opportunities within an organization when they become available. Succession planning does not guarantee a promotion, but it gives employees the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to hold higher level positions. This process, if designed correctly, will ensure continued organizational success by identifying and developing those who have the desire and potential to lead in the future. Successful succession planning takes years to develop and must include all levels of the organization. In most cases it is not the job of the current leadership to select the future leaders of the organization, but rather to develop a culture in which those who have a desire and passion to lead can develop their individual skill set so they can compete for future opportunities. A succession planning process is multifaceted and includes clearly identified requirements for each rank, coaching and training opportunities that align with those requirements, an effective evaluation tool to identify and plan for

professional development, and effective communication with current leadership on how the employee is progressing.

The department is recommended to ensure the tools for effective succession planning are developed, such as training, job descriptions, performance evaluations, and promotions. Currently, three of five full-time personnel are age eligible for retirement, including the Chief and Assistant Chief, with no current plan in place at the time either management member retires. The follow cover key areas needed to help the City develop a succession plan.

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are useful communication tools to explain to employees what tasks an employer expects them to perform. Job descriptions should also address performance standards. Without these tools, employees may not perform as expected. Job descriptions also identify the education, skill, and ability necessary for a position. Minimum qualifications assist in screening for recruitment and promotional purposes and provide employees with a guide of what will be needed to attain higher ranking positions they may be interested in obtaining in the future.

Job descriptions are also an important part of the application process – in which the applicant acknowledges they are capable of performing the functions of the position. The job descriptions should also delineate responsibilities– not only operational skills, but also management and leadership skills required for the positions. These job descriptions should be utilized not only in the hiring process, but also the promotional process.

Position description information can be found in the Department SOGs, although not all have a revision date, and the information contained appears to need updating. Job descriptions are recommended to be developed or updated for each position in the department, incorporating the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position. Job descriptions should not be an instrument that is adopted and placed in the SOGs. Since jobs change, it is difficult to keep them updated without updating the entire manual. If the Department feels it needs to adopt the positions as part of the SOGs, a brief description is appropriate in the SOGs, but the comprehensive job descriptions should be kept separate.

Promotional Process

The staffing recommendations include the incorporation of a Lieutenant, which is a rank that would fall under the FPC jurisdiction. The Consultants suggest the inclusion of a testing process called an Assessment Center for this promotional opportunity. An Assessment Center is a process that places the candidate in a testing environment that provides a high degree of reliability and insight into his/her supervisory, leadership, management, and/or operational potential by testing skills and ability, rather than just knowledge. The candidate participates in a series of exercises designed to simulate his/her competency to perform a particular job.

The Assessment Center process allows the Assessors to observe the candidate's thought process, organizational skills, leadership ability, stress tolerance, analytical skills, influence, delegation ability, decisiveness, sensitivity and/or empathy, communication techniques (both verbal and non-verbal), ability to function as a team member, and his/her ethics. In addition, assessment center testing can also be utilized to show a candidate's ability to command.

Performance Management

Performance appraisals are among the most valuable and important tools available to a supervisor. Evaluations, or performance appraisals, are essential to provide meaningful feedback and improve employee performance. When handled effectively, these reviews can help close the gap between what employees do and what administration needs them to do. Performance discussions can also assist in retention of the employee. Employees who feel engaged, can contribute to the organization, as well as respected are more often likely to stay.

Presently, the Department does not conduct evaluations. The Department should introduce a simple evaluation system that not only provides feedback on operational performance, but one that also looks at the establishment of goals and professional development. Development of employees internally will assist in retention and succession planning. In addition, an evaluation process should also be developed for new members and completed frequently until there is a consistent performance in all areas of expectation.

Employees typically desire honest and regular feedback. As a result, an effective performance management system should include regular communication between a supervisor and employee to ensure that employee's performance in all areas are reinforced and supported; identify and leverage opportunities to utilize the employee's greatest strengths, and address performance deficiencies and expectations immediately. In addition, the process provides an opportunity to discuss career and professional development opportunities which can also benefit the department for effective succession planning.

HR/Management Training

Training recommendations have been incorporated into the Training section of this report.

Recommendations – Personnel Practices

- *Develop job descriptions to incorporate the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position. **Priority 2.***
- *Incorporate an Assessment Center process into the Fire Department promotional process. **Priority 5.***

- *The City should develop a basic performance evaluation instrument for the Department. The instrument should outline basic performance expectations of every employee and establish professional and/or organizational goals for the upcoming year. **Priority 4.***
- *Performance evaluations should be provided formally and at least annually and include discussion of the needs of the employee in order to ensure the organization is meeting them; thus, the employee understands that not only is he or she beneficial to the organization but that the Department is concerned about his or her individual needs. **Priority 5.***
- *Develop an ongoing performance evaluation process for new employees. **Priority 4.***
- *All evaluating officers should be trained in performance management and how to conduct performance evaluations. **Priority 4.***

Fair Labor Standard Act

FLSA overtime requirements for public safety employees differ from other employees, because a specified number of work hours is needed within the FLSA work period before the FLSA rate can be applied to overtime pay; this provision is commonly referred to as the 7(k) exemption. The law allows the employer (municipality) to choose a pay cycle from seven (7) to twenty-eight (28) days as illustrated in the Table below, for specific fire positions.

Table 30: FLSA 7(k) Work Period Chart

Consecutive Days Work Prior	Hours of Fire Protection
28	212
27	204
26	197
25	189
24	182
23	174
22	167
21	159
20	151
19	144
18	136
17	129
16	121
15	114
14	106
13	98
12	91
11	83

Consecutive Days Work Prior	Hours of Fire Protection
10	76
9	68
8	61
7	53

Each covered employer is required to establish a written work period in which it calculates compensation. The City does not currently have a written policy on its work period for the non-union personnel, but this is identified in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA). If no written work FLSA Cycle exists, the City should be following the traditional 40-hour/7-day work week to calculate overtime. The City is recommended to immediately develop a written policy outlining the FLSA Work Periods for incorporation into the City's Employee Manual to clarify its current practice.

Recommendations – Fair Labor Standards Act

- *Develop a written policy confirming a 28-day work period in accordance with 7(k) for overtime calculations for fire positions. **Priority 1.***
- *The City should track and pay FLSA overtime, apart from regular overtime, through a separate line item in the Fire Department's budget for transparency and the City's ability to analyze overtime usage and strategize reduction options. **Priority 3.***

Compensation Compliance

The POC personnel are paid \$1.00 per hour for every hour they are on-call. When they report to work, they are then paid an hourly rate of pay. POC are paid monthly, but the on-call pay is paid out twice per year.

This section delineates the regulations of the FLSA as it applies to forms of employment including paid-on-call. Thus, how the individuals are classified and how they are compensated will be the determining factors in the City's obligations under the FLSA. When Federal and State FLSA regulations conflict, the ruling is based on what is most beneficial for the employee.

The FLSA covers a broad range of employers. An employer, unlike under other employment laws, does not need to employ a threshold number of employees to be covered. An organization must comply with the FLSA if the organization:

- Is engaged in interstate commerce and has a gross income of \$500,000; or
- Is a public agency; or operates a hospital, health care facility or school.

There is no question the Fire Department is considered to be a public agency and thus falls under the FLSA provisions.

The next question to ask is what is an employee? The definition of an employee under FLSA is an individual who performs services for the “employer.” If an individual is not an employee, he or she is not covered by the minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping, and other provisions of the FLSA. The Department of Labor has determined that payment to volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters on a per-hour basis creates an employment relationship. This type of payment is akin to hourly wages based on productivity (DOL, Wage and Hour Division Opinion Letter July 7, 1999). As a result, the POC personnel with the City of Mendota, are considered employees. This means the City must ensure the following:

- There is an established work cycle
- Ensure hours worked over the work cycle are paid at an overtime rate
- All hours at paid at least at the established minimum wage
- Ensure compensation is made within state wage payment guidelines.

Within the State of Illinois, wages must be paid at least semi-monthly, so as employees, paid-on-call should be placed on the bi-weekly payroll system. The City must pay wages earned within 13 days following the close of the pay period, so all on-call compensation must also be paid bi-weekly.

Recommendation

- *Include paid on call personnel into the bi-weekly payroll process, which must include all on-call payments for each pay period. **Priority 1***
- *Ensure paid on call is listed as a classification within the 28-day work period cycle for overtime calculations. **Priority 1***

Personnel Policies

Personnel Policy Manuals/Handbooks are a summary of information about an organization that will often include administrative procedures and employment related policies. This document should cover basic topics such as expectations of conduct, selection and promotional processes, hours of work, discipline, benefits (if applicable), separation, and standard employment policy topics such as harassment, nepotism, use of technology etc. The City has an Employee Manual, which was last revised in 2014 and is missing critical topics, such as nepotism, reasonable accommodations, right for nursing mothers, social media, and others. This document is not currently distributed. The Employee Manual should be updated annually to include new topics or legal changes. Having outdated policies in place but not followed can be as much of a liability to an organization as having no policies at all. When asked, the Chief and Assistant Chief are covered by this Manual, union employees follow the CBA, and the POC follow SOGs. All employees, regardless if they are union, non-union, or POC, should be covered by the Employee Handbook as that is the official document containing the official policies of the City and covers topics outside the parameters of collective bargaining process.

The Fire Department provided the Consultants with its SOGs. SOG's or operational policy should be determined by the Fire Department subject matter experts, but guiding personnel related policies should

be determined by a legal or human resource subject matter expert, who would recommend policy for the entire City. A department's personnel related policies should only supplement the City's policies, if necessary. The City policy should always supersede unless otherwise specified in the Policy Manual.

After the Employee Handbook is updated, the City is recommended to evaluate these SOG's for elimination, modification, and to ensure no SOGs conflict with City Policy. All employees should be provided a copy of all updated SOG's and sign an acknowledgement of receipt.

Nepotism

The City currently has a nepotism policy, which is Policy 104, Personal Relationships in the Workplace, within the Employee Manual. The Department currently has a Father/Son nepotism situation, in which the Chief is the Father, and a firefighter is the Son. It was described that this situation was brought to the City Council, who approved this relationship in the workplace.

The City is recommended to ensure this policy is up to date to meet its needs, and strictly enforce this policy going forward to prevent future challenges. Because the City allowed the exception to this policy, the City should take formal steps to minimize the chance the two employees may work together while the two are employed with the City.

The following should be strongly considered by the City:

- The Firefighter should report directly to the Assistant Fire Chief (or Lieutenant).
- The Firefighter should not be eligible for any promotional position that would put him in a direct subordinate position to the Chief while the Father is Chief.
- The Chief should recuse himself from future performance evaluations or disciplinary processes related to this Firefighter.
- The Chief should recuse himself from making any recommendations to the collective bargaining process which may be perceived as benefiting the Firefighter.
- The City should prohibit the work schedule changes and any overtime in which the two family members would work a shift together.

These should be put in writing for the impacted employees.

Conflict of Interest and Ethics

The City currently has an Ethics and Conduct Policy (Policy 103 of the Employee Manual) and Conflict of Interest Policy (Policy 107 of the Employee Manual). The following is from the Employee Manual:

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of the City's business dealings.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where an employee or relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which the City does business, but also when an employee or relative

receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift, or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving the City.

The Department currently holds a contract for services with the Assistant Fire Chief, for ambulance billing. Although it is understood that all parties acknowledge this relationship to the ambulance billing contract is in conflict with the policies 103 and 107, the City is recommended to have a legal review of the scenario to ensure no conflict of interest or ethics violation has occurred because an employee has a financial interest with this contract.

Recommendation – Personnel Policies

- *Update the City's Employee Handbook for compliance and best practices and indicate City's policy supersedes all department policies, if conflicting. **Priority 3.***
- *Review SOGs to ensure no conflicts exist between City and Department policy topics and amend, as necessary. **Priority 3.***
- *Provide all policies to employees and require a written acknowledgement of receipt. **Priority 3.***
- *The City should implement barriers for nepotism concerns as outlined in the report. These should be provided to the impacted employees in writing. **Priority 1.***
- *The City is recommended to have a legal review of the service agreement for ambulance billing for potential conflict of interest or ethics concerns. **Priority 1.***

Personnel Records

Personnel records have three (3) major functions in an organization. They provide a memory or recall to administration and employees; they offer documentation of events for use in resolving questions or human resources problems; and they provide data for research, planning, problem solving, and decision-making.

While federal, state, and local laws require that certain employee information be maintained, certain basic records should also be retained to avoid errors of memory and provide information for making management and human resources decisions.

It is understood by the Consultants that all personnel related documents are maintained with the Fire Chief, while the City holds payroll and benefit related documents. The documents held in the Fire Department are maintained in the Chief's Office, but not in a locked cabinet.

Contents of personnel files vary by organization, but most human resources professionals accept some practices as standard. It is understood the City will need to better separate the contents of the files currently held by the Fire Department. The following provides a non-inclusive list of standard items, and where they should be maintained:

Table 31: HR Personnel Records

MAIN EMPLOYEE FILE
Acknowledgement of employee handbook
Acknowledgement of policies/policy revisions
Application Materials
Certifications, licences, transcripts, etc.
Official performance documentation (memos, letters, discipline, recognition, etc.)
Offer/promotion/transfer letter(s)
Orientation checklist
Performance appraisals
Status Change documentation (change of address, position etc.)
Termination checklist
Training requests (with approval and/or denial documentation)

SEPARATE PAYROLL FILE
COBRA and other mandatory benefits notices
Direct deposit authorizations
Group benefit enrollment forms (health insurance or other forms with medical information must be placed in medical file)
Miscellaneous deductions, garnishment orders, etc.
New Hire verification
Retirement system calculations/benefits
W-4 form

SEPARATE MEDICAL FILE – MANDATORY SEPARATION
FMLA documentation or other medical leave
Medical/Psychological pre-employment exams
Non-CDL drug and/or alcohol screening (CDL screening mandates its own file)
Other medical tests results
Sick verification notes
Vaccine records and/or declination form
Worker's compensation information (doctor reports, letters, etc.)

SUBJECT FILES – MANDATORY SEPARATION OR BEST PRACTICE SEPARATION
CDL/DOT drug and alcohol tests (maintain together for auditing purposes)
Immigration Control Form I-9 (maintain together for auditing purposes)
Investigation notes or reports
Litigation documents
Worker's compensation claims

The Fire Department should maintain limited information regarding an employee, and the information they have should be kept in a locked file with access only by the Chief and supervisors. Information maintained in the department files should be limited to copies of disciplinary actions and performance evaluations. All other information on an individual should be kept in the City's official file, which should be kept with all other personnel files. Anyone with access to the Department's files should be trained on employee confidentiality.

Individual supervisors should maintain the Department's confidential employee file that is utilized to store information (notes) to assist in the development of a performance evaluation. However, once any piece of information is acted upon, given a disciplinary action, or documented in the performance evaluation, the original form should be maintained in the City's personnel file, with a copy in the Department file. Any supervisory notes should be destroyed once transferred to an official document.

Recommendations – Personnel Records

- *Ensure all active and inactive personnel files are maintained with the City's personnel files. Departments should only maintain supervisory files on active employees. **Priority 2.***
- *Officers should be trained on the contents and legality of supervisory files. **Priority 3.***

Fire Department Safety and Health

Safety Audit

On August 20, 2020, the Illinois Department of Labor conducted an Illinois Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) inspection of the Mendota Fire Department. During this inspection, a number of violations were noted that involved the health and safety of employees within the Fire Department. Many of these violations were related to the testing of ground ladders, aerial ladder, fit testing of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) facepieces, no medical certification of personnel to wear SCBA and lack of training in areas of structural firefighting, hazardous materials, evacuation, and confined spaces. The following table summarizes the violations that were found in the August 20th inspection.

Table 32: Summary of Health & Safety Violations

Violation	Description	Violation Type	Summary
Structural FF Training	Failure to Provide Training	Serious	Training Occurred and Documented
Firefighting Equipment	Failure to Test Equipment	Serious	Testing Completed and Documented
Failure to Train	No Training in Haz Mat Awareness	Serious	Training Occurred and Documented
No Hepatitis B Program	No Vaccinations or Documentation	Serious	Program Developed and Documented
No Exposure Program	Failure to Track Medical Exposures	Serious	Program Developed and Documented
No Medical Eval Program	No Medical Program	Serious	Program Developed and Documented
No Confined Space Program	No Testing of Confined Spaces	Serious	Program Developed and Documented
No Evacuation Program	No Training on Evacuation	Other-than-Serious	Program Developed and Documented

Corrective action did occur in all of the areas and the Illinois Department of Labor was notified of compliance with the violations noted in their letter of August 20, 2020. The consultants are concerned that not enough practical, hands-on training, is being provided to adequately meet the intent of the IL Department of Safety and Health in the areas of evacuation. The consultants could find no program documentation regarding annual testing of Department equipment such as ladders, meters, etc. or medical exposure procedures.

Written programs are required for each of these activities and training in these areas must be conducted every year and documented as per the Illinois Department of Health.

The testing of ladders, SCBA, hose, facepieces etc., has been completed for 2021; this must continue.

Recommendation – Employee Safety and Health

- *The Fire chief must ensure that the IL Department of Labor's safety and health standards are properly adhered to on an annual basis and that all employees are trained and held accountable in their use. **Priority 1.***
- *The City of Mendota must ensure that adequate funding is provided to the Department for compliance with the Illinois Department of Labor's safety and health standards. **Priority 1.***

Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines

The consultant reviewed the standard operating procedures/guidelines (SOP or SOGs) of the Fire Department. These documents are intended to provide firefighters with procedures or guidelines to follow for a variety of situations that they will encounter in the performance of their duties. Generally, these documents are divided into two categories, emergency medical services and fire department operations (emergency and non-emergency).

The purpose of these documents is twofold, first to provide employees with a set of actions to undertake when encountering emergency situations, secondly, these documents can serve as basis for Fire Department training and supplemented by other training materials to re-enforce their use.

In evaluating these documents, the consultants noted that there is no common format for all policies. The format is inconsistent between policies that make following the documents somewhat difficult. None of the policies have an approval date and most do not have any indication that the documents have been approved by Fire Department administration. The consultants viewed documents that were displayed in “strike through” mode and many of the documents contained the watermark DRAFT displayed on them. It was difficult to determine which SOG’s were adopted, and which ones were in draft status or under revision.

The consultant cross referenced the violations noted in the Illinois Department of Labor and some of the violations that were corrected did not have corresponding policies advising employees of the proper procedures as required by the IL Department of Labor.

Looking further the consultant did not find corresponding training documentation indicating that the employees have not received the appropriate training on the subjects noted in the notice of violation.

Based on the review of these documents the consultant does not believe that the necessary policies have been properly developed, documented, implemented, and trained on. This is a fundamental responsibility of Fire Department leadership to provide this information to all employees, especially to probationary firefighters and less senior members who are still learning their roles and responsibilities of the Department.

Regarding the policies (protocols) for emergency medical services, the consultants were not provided a copy of these documents.

Recommendation – Fire Department Policies

- *Fire Department administration must engage in a formal process to develop Department policies, in conjunction with employees (as required by the collective bargaining agreement), that are based on national standards and accepted industry standards. **Priority 1.***

- *Fire Department policies must be developed using a common template that include an approval signature of Fire Department leadership, approval date, revision date, if applicable, and numbering system. **Priority 1.***
- *Fire Department leadership must have a common dissemination process of all policies to employees. Policies must be available in written and electronic format for ease of access by personnel at the fire station or via the worldwide web. Employees should sign for all Department policies indicating that they have received the policies and read them. **Priority 1.***
- *Fire Department leadership must provide approved training on the policies of the Department and ensure that the training is documented through approved training reports. **Priority 1.***
- *Fire Department leadership must review all policies yearly and update or revise policies based on changes in national standards or industry practices. Employees should be involved in the review of the policies. **Priority 2.***

Facilities

The Mendota Fire Department covers 128 square miles for fire and EMS services from essentially one staffed station located at 610 Main Street in Mendota. The City operates a second, unstaffed, station located at 1207 4th Street in Mendota. Station 2 serves mainly as a storage building for apparatus and equipment and contains no living facilities.

Station 1

The main station, Station 1, was constructed in 1982 and was essentially designed for a single full-time firefighter to live in the station. It is a single-story building with a partial basement. The building's construction is a basically a metal building using cinder block for main interior walls and poured concrete for the basement. The building's total square footage is approximately 6,750 square feet.

Figure 5: Mendota Station 1



Today the station is staffed by at least two Firefighters and additional paid-on-call personnel as needed.

The apparatus bay contains approximately 4,500 square feet, followed by 1,650 square feet of living area and the training area (basement) at 600 square feet. Overall, the building is well maintained, and the consultant found it clean and orderly. In the experience of the consultants, building maintenance and cleanliness is a reflection of the staff's pride towards their job and profession. Many firefighters considered their station their "home away home" and the building reflects well on the personnel of Mendota Fire Department.

The table below lists the apparatus that is assigned to this station.

Table 33: Apparatus Housed at Station 1

Vehicle ID	City/Rural	Apparatus Type
612	City	Engine
615	City	Heavy Rescue
617	City	Tower Ladder
619	City	Utility Pickup
605	City	Command
1-M-17	City	Ambulance
Tender	Rural	Tender

The station contains no automatic fire sprinkler system and only has local smoke alarms that are not interconnected or monitored off sight in the event of an activation. According to the United States Fire Administration, an average, 150 fires per year occur in fire stations. (Probably many more small fires go unreported.) The most common hazard is a fire that starts within an apparatus. Another leading cause is kitchen appliances left on during a response. Some of these fires have resulted in substantial damage and sometimes personnel injuries.

Figure 6: Example of a Fire Station Fire



Regarding the apparatus bay, it contains no source capture system to collect diesel and gasoline exhaust particulate from operating diesel and gasoline engines. The apparatus bay does have air “scrubbers” that activate when they sense particulate; however, scrubbers are much less efficient and effective than source capture systems.

The building is heated through a natural gas fired forced air system in the living areas and uses natural gas radiant heating for the apparatus bay. The station is equipped with an emergency standby generator that is capable of supplying the fire station and police station with electricity to run both buildings simultaneously.

As in most fire stations constructed in the 1980s, the needs of the Fire Department have outgrown the building. Many of the rooms have been repurposed from their original designed use. There is insufficient storage space for spare equipment, personal protective equipment, medical equipment/supplies, hose, and other miscellaneous equipment. For example, protective gear, i.e., turnout gear, is stored on the apparatus floor and subject to exposure from diesel and gas exhaust particulate proven to contribute varying types of cancer with prolonged exposure. Protective clothing should be stored in a separate room with proper ventilation and exposure to light to prolong the life of the gear and limit exposure to diesel and gas particulate.

A washer and dryer have been installed to permit Department members to wash their protective gear as well as other items used at the station. Bio-medical items, i.e., blood-stained items, are bagged and stored at the station until they can be transported to the hospital for cleaning.

With regards to the living areas, the kitchen and dayroom are not large enough to accommodate more than one or two firefighters. Restroom bunkroom facilities are inadequate for female firefighters. The firefighters have made modifications to the shower room area, at their expense, to make it more modern and functional.

The communication's room is too small for the current operations, especially with the addition of security camera monitors. Finally, the administrative offices are insufficient, especially for the short term and allow little options in pursuing organizational changes.

The training area/room for the Fire Department is located in the basement of the station. Again, this room is inadequate for the training needs of the Department. In difficult economic times more fire departments are using more cost-effective training methods such as train the trainer concept. One individual receives training and become certified and able to present the training to the entire department resulting in certification of other firefighters who take the class. This requires a training area to be equipped with the basic audiovisual and video conferencing equipment necessary to present classroom instruction. The training room has no audiovisual equipment and is unsuitable for basic classroom instruction.

The station does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); essentially the station is due for a much-needed upgrade to address the current and future needs of the Fire Department and the City.

The consultants are not qualified to determine whether or not the recommendations made for the improvement to the Mendota Fire Station 1 can be incorporated into the current footprint of fire station site. This will impact the decision regarding the remodeling of current station or construction of a new station as well as the timetable and financing options to the project. However, the station is in need of updating to reflect current industry standards in the fire and emergency medical service field.

Recommendations – Fire Station 1

- *A site evaluation should be conducted by a qualified architect to determine if the recommendation made in this report can be incorporated into the existing footprint of the current fire station location. **Priority 3.***
- *The station should be remodeled or replaced taking into consideration of the recommendations in this report as well as other industry standards for fire and EMS facilities. **Priority 3.***

Station 2

Fire Station 2, located at 1207 4th Street, is a single story, four bay, metal frame building that is used for storage of reserve apparatus and equipment for the Fire Department. The building was constructed in 1977. The building has a suspended natural gas furnace that maintains the building's temperature above freezing. The Department stores two reserve ambulances, a reserve engine, 28-foot enclosed technical rescue trailer, a Polaris UTV and trailer, and a 20-foot trailer containing welding equipment.

The area around the building contains enough space to conduct training with apparatus, perform basic fireground evolutions, and perform extrication exercise using passenger vehicles and light trucks.

Figure 7: Mendota Fire Station 2



The building contains no fire protection systems and no living accommodations. Behind the station is a fuel depot for the Department and other city vehicles. The building is equipped with an emergency generator capable of providing electricity to the building.

Overall, this building is well maintained well, and the building is in good structural shape based on the observation of the consultant.

Recommendations – Fire Station 2

- *If the station is remodeled or has a change in use, the building should be updated with an off-site monitored automatic fire sprinkler and smoke detection systems. **Priority 5.***

Training Building

The Fire Department has constructed a training facility on property owned by the City adjacent to the fairgrounds complex. The City Police Department use this same property and have a target range and other building(s) that they use for entering high risk buildings.

Department members have taken numerous metal containers and constructed a training building that consists of various levels, angles, heights, and challenges. The training building is not complete as of this report. The Department does not intend to use this building for conducting live burns, but will conduct confined space training, high angle rescue, rappelling, and roof ventilation training. The Department has also constructed a rapid intervention training building that allows Firefighters to practice emergency evacuations from structures.

Figure 8: Mendota Training Building



Figure 9: Rapid Intervention Training Building



The Department members should be commended for their dedication and efforts to improve their training through the construction of these training buildings/props. It is rare that Firefighters work to improve their own training needs on the scale that has been undertaken in Mendota.

The consultant does have a concern that the construction is unsupervised by an engineering firm regarding the construction and welding of containers. The Department should also consult national standards concerning the construction and operations of a training center such as National Fire Protection Association's Standard 1402, Standard on Facilities for Fire Training and Associated Props.

Recommendation – Training Center

- *The training center and rapid intervention training building must be designed, constructed, and operated using approved engineering practices and in accordance with NFPA 1402. **Priority 1.***

Apparatus/Vehicles/Equipment

As previously noted, the Mendota Fire Department protects the City of Mendota (5.1 sq. mi.) and the Mendota/Troy Grove Fire Protection District (122.9 sq. mi.) for a total of 128 square miles.

The Department operates 12 primarily 12 pieces of apparatus from one staffed station. Reserve apparatus and tailers are stored at the Department's, unstaffed, Station 2. The table below identifies the apparatus owned by the City Mendota Fire Department and the Mendota/Troy Grove Fire Protection District. The apparatus listed below listed under the "rural" category are owned by the Mendota/Troy Grove Fire Protection District.

Table 34: Mendota City and Rural Apparatus

Vehicle ID	City/Rural	Apparatus Type	Year	Age	Manufacturer	Mileage	Hours	Pump Capacity	Tank (Gallons)
612	City	Engine	2010	12	HME / Alexis	17,233	1,521.3	1,500	1,000
613	City	Engine	1994	28	HME / Luverne	47,259	4,813.0	1,250	1,000
615	City	Heavy Rescue	2001	21	HME / Alexis	8,405	1,157.7	N/A	N/A
617	City	Tower Ladder	2004	18	Pierce 100'	7,416	911.4	2,000	300
619	City	Utility Pickup	2015	7	Chevy 3500	38,801	3,312.0	N/A	N/A
605	City	Command	2013	9	Chevy Suburban	54,713	3,844.8	N/A	N/A
1-M-17	City	Ambulance	2012	10	Ford / Medtec	51,953	6,897.2	N/A	N/A
1-M-30	City	Ambulance	2006	16	Ford / Medtec	86,122	6,581.7	N/A	N/A
1-M-31	City	Ambulance	2001	21	Ford / Medtec	31,433	4,587.7	N/A	N/A
UTV-1	City	UTV	2010	12	Polaris Ranger	537	89.7	N/A	N/A
Tender	Rural	Tender	2004	18	International 8600	5,545	514.0	N/A	3,000
Brush Truck	Rural	Brush Truck	1996	26	Dodge 3500	51,878	NR	N/A	300

Median age of apparatus is 17 years, and the median mileage and hours are 35,117 and 3,312 respectively for all apparatus. Engine 612 and the utility pick up (619) have medical equipment that enables them to be considered as non-transport advanced life support response vehicles. This equipment allows for paramedics to treat patients at the scenes of an emergency; however, these apparatuses do not have capability to transport patients.

Not included on the table above is a 28-foot trailer owned by the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division 25 and is located at Mendota Station 2. The Mendota Fire Department also owns the following equipment not listed on the above table; Scotty RV Fire Safety House, Corn Pro Utility Trailer, Roadmaster Enclosed Trailer.

Apparatus Maintenance

Apparatus maintenance is overseen by the Fire Chief. If something is found non-operation with the apparatus the Chief is notified, and the apparatus is taken out of service. If the apparatus cannot be repaired in-house it is taken to a third party for necessary repairs.

Apparatus Records

The consultants reviewed the apparatus maintenance records as submitted through the original data request regarding Department information. The consultants found computerized data records for each fire apparatus and ambulance. The computerized maintenance records contained the following information on the record: date the maintenance was performed, miles/hours of the vehicle, who performed the work, and a very brief explanation of the work performed. No information was present regarding the cost of the repairs including parts or labor. Why is all of this information important?

With almost 20% of firefighter fatalities and injuries caused by accidents involving fire department apparatus the importance of maintaining accurate and complete apparatus maintenance records cannot be overstated. In the event of an accident, injury or death involving department apparatus it will be essential to provide comprehensive records on all issues associated with that apparatus; including but not limited to maintenance issues, diagnoses made, work performed, individuals completing the work and parts/costs associated with the repair.

NFPA 1911 Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles (2017 edition) requires the following:

4.7 Documentation

4.7.1 Record shall be maintained on the results of all apparatus inspections, maintenance requests, preventive maintenance, repairs, and testing

4.7.2 Separate files shall be established and maintained for each individual emergency vehicle.

4.7.3 All records shall be kept for the life of the vehicle and delivered with the vehicle upon transfer or change of ownership.

An opportunity exists to improve the maintenance records of the Department by including the individual(s) who performed the work on in-house maintenance, electronically attached invoices for work performed by approved third party repair facilities including the person who completed work. Also included should be the costs of parts and labor for the repairs made by approved third party repair facilities. The names of personnel who performed repairs completed in-house should also be included in the maintenance record. All of this information should be contained in the Department's RMS.

Lastly a formal policy should be developed and implemented with respect to the inspection and maintenance of Department vehicles that include the performance of daily, weekly, monthly, and semiannual of apparatus and equipment. Specifically, a policy should be developed to define what specific criteria must be met that would result in an apparatus being removed from service.

Recommendation – Apparatus Records

- *All apparatus records must meet the criteria as define in NFPA 1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles, 2017 Edition and NFPA 1915, Standard for Fire Apparatus Preventive Maintenance Program, 2000 Edition. **Priority 3***

Apparatus Condition

The apparatus appears to be in good condition and stocked with the tools and equipment listed by NFPA 1901 (2016 edition) and the Insurance Service Office (2013 revised) Fire Suppression Rating Schedule. Mendota apparatus and equipment are well maintained and appear to be in good functioning order. The consultant found the apparatus very clean. Again, the care of the apparatus and station reflect the dedication and pride that the Department members have in the City and the Department. The Fire Department should be congratulated on their efforts.

Odometers vs. Engine Hour Meters

An odometer is the instrument in a vehicle that shows you how far it has driven in miles and tenth of miles. An engine hour meter is an instrument that tracks and records overall elapsed time that the engine is actually running and is normally displayed in hours and tenths of hours; this information is important to ensure proper maintenance of apparatus. This maintenance typically involves replacing, changing, or checking parts, belts, filters, oil, lubrication or running condition in engines, motors, blowers, and fans, e.g., if maintenance is based solely on odometer readings maintenance most likely will be limited to oil changes; whereas the engine life of the apparatus may be affected.

Fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars may all have significantly higher engine running times compared to mileage. Fire trucks can be running for hours at the scene without clocking any mileage. The same is true with ambulances that spend significant amount of time running while rescue personnel attend to patients.

Sufficiency of Apparatus

Sufficiency of apparatus can be considered in two divergent ways: the amount of apparatus and its capability. The Consultants have observed fire departments that have an abundance of apparatus, often resulting in apparatus that is rarely, if ever, deployed; or more apparatus than the department is able to staff. In other instances, departments are under-equipped and/or the apparatus is lacking the tools required to perform tasks on the emergency scene. The apparatus and equipment are appropriate for the department and satisfy both NFPA 1901, and the Insurance Service Office 2013 Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

According to the ISO report the Mendota Fire Department requires three engines (pumpers) to meet the anticipated fire flow of 3,000 gpm. The Department has sufficient engines to meet the fire flow requirement utilizing the Troy Grove Fire Protection District's engine under the automatic aid agreement.

Apparatus Replacement

Fire apparatus, like all types of mechanical devices, have a finite life. How long that life may be depends on many factors, such as mileage, engine hours, quality of the preventative maintenance program, technology advancements, quality of the driver training program, rule enforcement, quality of the original builder and components, availability of parts, and custom or commercial chassis, ability of the governing body to generate funding, and general appearance.

Over the years, the NFPA has attempted to define life expectancy of apparatus with little success. The 2016 edition of NFPA 1901 recommends fire departments evaluate whether to retain fire apparatus in first-line service for more than 15 years as a result of safety considerations.

Annex D, titled Guidelines for First Line and Reserve Fire Apparatus due to changes in NFPA 1901, especially relating to safety, fire departments should seriously consider not keeping fire apparatus more than 15 years in first-line service. It is recommended that apparatus more than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status; be upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1912 Standards for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing; and incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard (section D.3). Apparatus that were not manufactured to the applicable NFPA fire apparatus standard or that are over 25 years old should be replaced.

Another significant factor in equipment replacement as outlined in the NFPA Standard, is the rapidly changing area of technology, much of which is directly related to firefighter safety. Based on this factor, apparatus technology becomes an issue when considering replacement.

While some departments allude to the above reference that suggests that apparatus be replaced after 15 years of service, it should be noted that this is a national standard. The paragraph above is a one size fits all; it compares apparatus used in Chicago to the apparatus that are used in Mendota. Obviously, this comparison is not realistic in this case. It should also be noted that the *Annex D* is *not officially part* of the NFPA Standard and is presented as explanatory information only. The apparatus condition, maintenance history, cost of operation, and technology must be an important factor in replacing the apparatus. Collecting cost information, hours, and mileages will assist the Department in calculating an operating and maintenance cost per hour of operation to help determine when an apparatus should be replaced or placed in reserve.

Mendota Apparatus Replacement Schedule

The Mendota Fire Department does not have a funded replacement program for apparatus replacement. Combined with a cost analysis of the maintenance and operational costs of the apparatus, the Consultants recommend the replacement of apparatus as outlined in the table below as a guide:

Table 35: Proposed Apparatus Replacement Scheduled

Apparatus	Recommendation Years Front Line & Reserve
Engine/Pumper	15 Years with 5 Years Reserve
Aerial/Platform	20 Years with 5 Years in Reserve
Ambulance	8 Years & Remount Once + 8 Years
Heavy Rescue	15 Years with 5 Years Reserve
Brush Truck	10 Years no Reserve
Cars/Pickups	As Needed

Ambulance Remount

The consultants are aware of a concern regarding not replacing ambulances as frequently as in the past. As the consultant understand the issue, the Department provided interfacility transfers that significantly increased the mileage on ambulances thus resulting in more frequent replacement of ambulances. The transfers have since been significantly reduced thus reducing the mileage on ambulances, therefore the ambulances have not been replaced as often in the past. In today's environment of increasingly more expensive apparatus, remounting of ambulance bodies has been more a more viable options for smaller fire and EMS departments. Significant improvements in remounting have occurred over the years making this a very attractive option.

Remounting is an excellent, environmentally responsible, and economical solution. Remounting an existing ambulance patient care compartment on a new vehicle chassis is less expensive and often faster than building a new ambulance from scratch, making it an attractive upgrade path for many agencies. The remount process has been used more frequently in the past 10 years, and one in every five ambulances is soon expected to be a remount. The primary benefit of the ambulance remount route is its financial advantage; during the remount process, the existing patient compartment is stripped down and refurbish, the remounted ambulance on a new chassis is titled as a new unit.

Recommendation – Ambulance Remount

- *The City and Fire Department of Mendota should consider remounting ambulance bodies on their ambulances utilizing the preceding guidelines and information in the above table. **Priority Level 3.***

Training

Safe and effective service delivery is heavily dependent on quality preparation and the training of those who provide fire and EMS services. Supporting and maintaining such a training program within a department is an important aspect of risk management. A proper training program provides a safer work environment and better service to the community. Providing adequate, interesting, and informative training sessions to fire personnel can be a challenge for a fire training officer. The amount of time needed to adequately train department members to ensure competency and coordination, while maintaining proficiency with skills, is one of the biggest challenges faced by fire departments.

Training Program Overview

The Assistant Chief of the Mendota Fire Department has been designated as the training officer and is responsible for providing the training, publishing of a training schedule, and maintaining of the training records of the Department. The Department offers classroom, hands on training and course work provided through a web-based program called Vector Solutions.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) report dated September 25, 2013, gave the Fire Department no points towards the Department's training program. It appears that improvements have been made since the 2013 report; however, there are still numerous opportunities for the Department to improve its training program.

Fire training was provided on the second, third, and fourth Tuesdays of at 10 am and 7pm, this is for paid-on-call members as well as on-duty firefighters as well.

EMS trainings were provided by Mercy Health Hospital and consisted of three separate trainings per month on the same subject. The training sessions were offered during the day, in the evening, and then one Saturday. As a result of the pandemic Mercy Hospital reduced the training to one day per month.

The Department also utilizes the Vector Solutions Training program which is a web-based training platform that is provided through the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. The Vectors Solutions program was utilized beginning in 2021

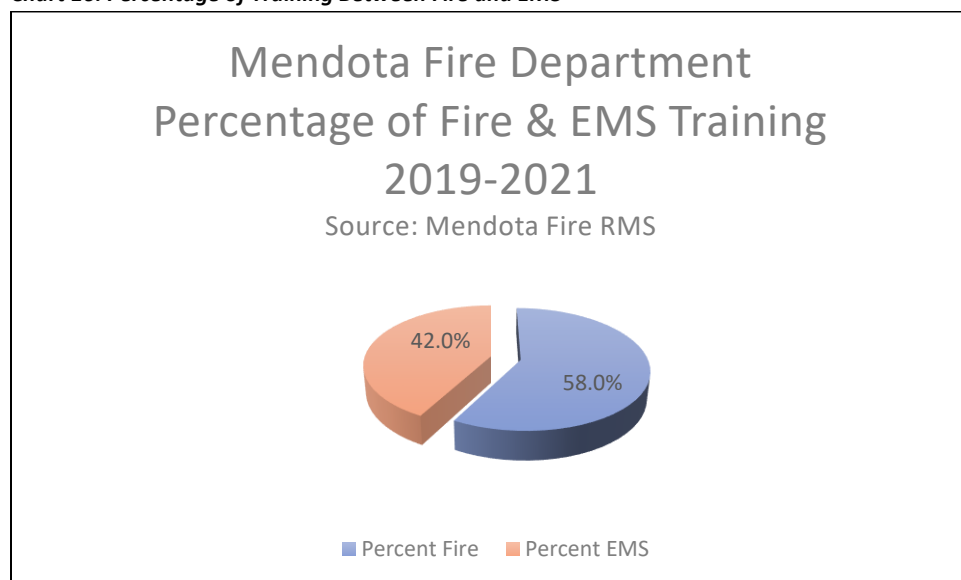
The table below illustrates the number of training hours, classes and number of firefighters participating in training for the years 2019-2021. Training hours were not broken out between fire and EMS training, so the table reflects the combined training hours.

Table 36: Mendota Fire Training Summary 2019-2021

Year	2019	2020	2021	Totals	Mean
Training Hrs.	544.0	417.0	604.5	1,565.5	521.8
Classes	279.0	292.0	254.0	825.0	275.0
Firefighters	27.0	28.0	21.0	76.0	25.3

Reviewing the records of the Vector Solutions web based training found 239 hours of training in 2021. In reviewing the individual records, it does appear that some of the classes may have been duplicated in the Department's training hours, thus the total training hours reported by the Department (605) and Vector Solutions (239) have been overstated; however, to what the degree the consultants cannot determine. Training hours for Vector Solutions is also not consistent for 2021. One report created listed employees and the number of trainings for all employees totaled 239 hours; however, when a report was generated for Vector Solution training subject by hours, it reported total hours as 177.25. For all training, the breakdown between fire and EMS training is depicted in the chart below.

Chart 16: Percentage of Training Between Fire and EMS

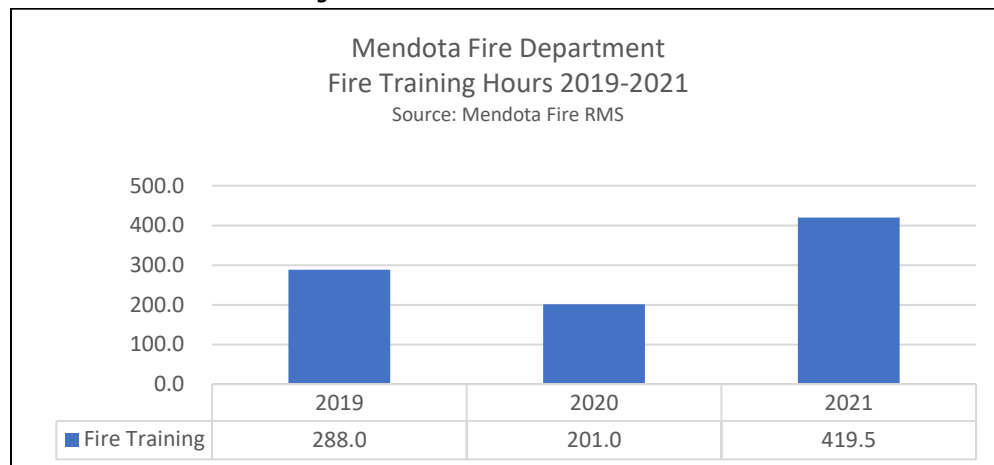


Recertification of Firefighters is done through a web-based program through Vector Solutions. Once the recertifications hours are obtained this information is forward to IFSI for the recertification process.

Fire Training

Firefighter certification is provided through the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI). At the time of this report all Firefighter have the basic firefighter certification or are in the process of obtaining the certification to perform their duties as firefighters in the Mendota Fire Department. Additionally, many firefighters hold additional certifications such as national incident management, hazardous materials, vehicle machinery operations, etc. The following chart depicts the fire service training hours by year for the Mendota Fire Department.

Chart 17: Mendota Fire Training Hours 2019-2021

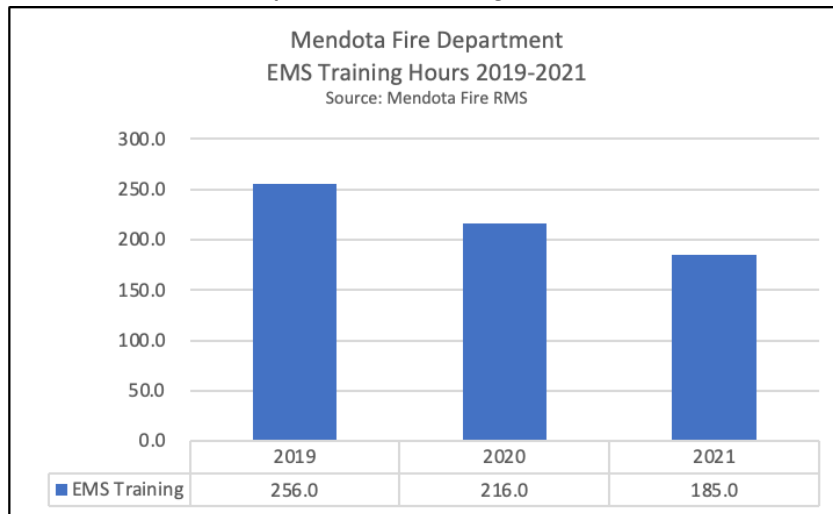


The chart shows a decrease in training hours from 2019 to 2020 most likely from the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. This is followed by an increase in training hours in 2021 most likely resulting from compliance with the IL Department of Labor inspection that required mandatory health and safety training. Overall, there was a 45.5% increase in the training hours from 2019-2021. The Department averaged 14.7 hours of fire training per firefighter over the period of 2019-2021.

EMS Training

Regarding initial emergency medical training, the Department's resource hospital, Mercy Health, provides the paramedic training needed for full-time members of the department as well as paid-on-call personnel seeking medical training. All full-time personnel are certified paramedics and the Department, and, at the time of this report, six paid-on-call firefighters are trained as emergency medical technician basics (EMT-B). Again, Vector Solutions web based training is used for recertification and once the recertification hours are achieved, the hours are forwarded to Mercy Health and recertification of the EMTs occurs. The following chart depicts the EMS training hours by year for the Mendota Fire Department.

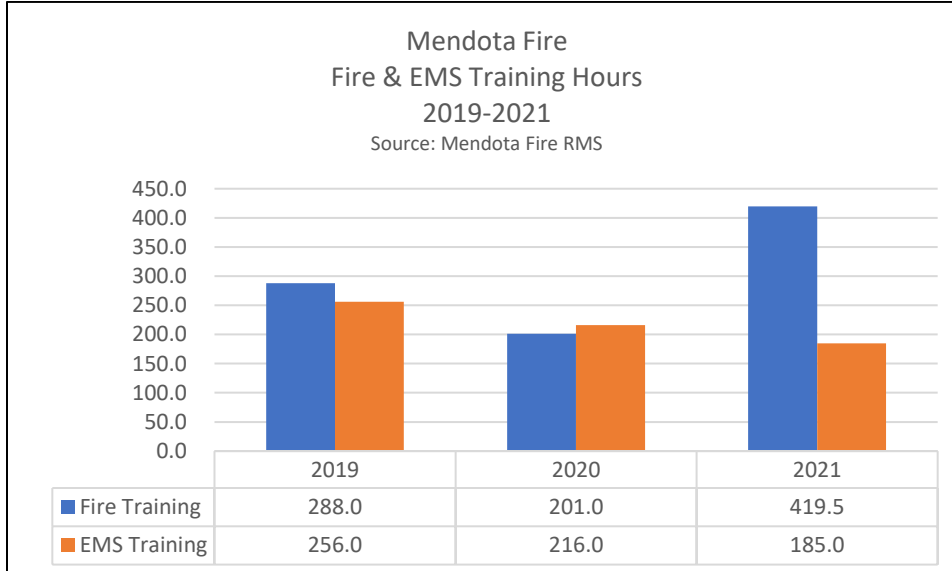
Chart 18: Mendota Fire Department EMS Training



The reader can see that the number of EMS training hours decreased over the period by approximately 27.7 % from 2019 to 2021. The Department averaged 11 hours of EMS training per firefighter over the same period.

Finally, the following chart illustrates the combination of fire and EMS training for the years 2019-2021.

Chart 19: Fire & EMS Training Hours 2019-2021



Currently training is recorded using Firehouse and Vector Solutions and the data is not consistent. Training hours should be recorded in one program or another, not both. This will result in more accurate training records.

The majority of Department training appears to be computer and individually based training. The recording of training subjects and hours is important; however, competency-based training is more effective. Competency based training results in a group of firefighters or EMS personnel performing fireground or EMS skills as a team as would really occur on the fireground or an EMS scene. Evaluation of the team would include wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, using correct equipment and procedures, and completing the evolution in acceptable time frames as established by national/industrial standards or as approved by the Mendota Fire Department.

According to the latest ISO survey of the Mendota Fire Department, the Department scored only 2.26 points out of a total of 9 points available. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Labor conducted an inspection of the Department in 2020 and noted several violations concerning the training of personnel. The consultant did not find any policies concerning the training of Department personnel; however, there is an operational procedure, 200.7 – Job Description, that outlines the training officer's position and duties. There is no effective date or approval date on the document, so it is difficult to determine whether or not this document is approved by the Department.

Training for fire department personnel can come from a variety of resources. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) publishes what they describe as their mandatory training subjects and hours. The following table identifies the training topics for fire departments and their respective hours.

Table 37: ISO Recommended Training Subjects

ISO Training	Hours
Company	192
Hazardous Materials	6
Driver	20
New Driver	60
Officer	12
New Recruit	240
Facility (Tower)	18
Pre-Fire Planning	1

ISO mandates that these subject hours be taught yearly for all personnel. Obviously, ISO states that these subjects and hours are mandatory, however, it would be difficult for most fire departments to comply with these provisions. ISO mandates these training subjects and hours to obtain maximum credit under training. However, the subjects are worthy of instruction in all Departments, especially driving for new and existing employees.

Fire Department leadership should outline a formal training program in writing that prescribes the outcomes expected of personnel in terms of skill development/accomplish, certification requirements, attendance, and measurement processes. The program should be developed using national/industry

standards, state requirements for fire and EMS certification, human resource practices and local needs of firefighters, medical director, and skills that the Department utilizes in the performance of their duties.

The Department must engage in creating a formal yearly training calendar/schedule for full-time, part-time, and paid-on-call personnel based on the skills that the Department utilizes. Included should be required human resource training required by the City and the good human resource practices. The training scheduled can be modified based on a specific need that arises; however, it is important to have a formal training schedule that personnel can see and plan on. It would be advisable to include feedback from the firefighters as to needed skills that they feel may be important outside of recertification requirements.

Human Resource Training

Fire service work schedules are unique in the fact that it requires workers to “live” together as well as work together. This dynamic is not seen in other municipal employment. This type of employment required that employees be training in a host of human resource topics that include but is not limited to diversity, harassment, discrimination, sexual orientation, and team building. This education is important for all employees to understand what these topics mean, what they look like, and what are the legal obligations of employees and the employee in preventing this situation from occurring. This and other human resource training must be provided yearly to prevent and deal with this unacceptable behavior.

The consultant did review some training records in the Vector Solutions regarding sexual harassment awareness, however, 95% of the training that the Department engaged in was skills-based fire and EMS training. Human resource training must be rooted in the City of Mendota’s policies and the responsibilities that Chief Officers and Firefighters roles within these policies.

Leadership/Management Training

The Fire Service has not typically trained Chief Officers in the areas of management and leadership. For far too long the Fire Service has made the assumption that if a person were a good firefighter, he or she would make a good fire chief. Such is not always the case. Today’s fire chiefs are required to be innovative thinkers, problem solvers, coaches, administrators, mentors, and excellent communicators to name just a few characteristics. Fire Chiefs also need to be acutely aware of good financial practices, human resource practices that promote inclusion, positive work environments, motivation, and if need be, discipline. In fact, all fire department members initial and ongoing training in policies such as harassment, teamwork, and the other “soft skills” that are needed when employees not only work together, but live together. The table below identifies some of the leadership and management skills training that must be included in a good department training program.

Table 38: Recommended Supervisory Training Subjects

Training - Supervision Topics	
Principle of Supervision	Managing Change
Management vs. Leadership	Diversity

Training - Supervision Topics	
Supervisor: Linking Pin Concept	Problem Solving
Ethics	Managing Differences
Dealing with Conflict	Managing Multiple Projects
Legal	Time Management
- Harassment	Delegation
- Discrimination	Performance Management
- Job (race, religion, sex, or national origin)	- Documentation
- Age	- Evaluations
- Disability (Americans with Disabilities Act)	Employee Attitudes
- Military	- Coaching
- Gender-pay differences	- Motivation
- Pregnancy	- Empowerment
- Immigration	- Influencing
- Sexual Orientation	- Discipline
Fair Labor Standards Act	Confidentiality
Family Medical Leave Act	Strategic Thinking
Workplace Safety	Political Savvy
Communication	Negotiating
Interpersonal Relationships	Creativity
Team Building	Innovation

Fire Service training has historically been based on teaching basic firefighter and EMS skills; however, to create high performance organizations, there must be a blend of technical, supervisory, and leadership training provided to all levels of the fire department. This is especially relevant to provide succession planning for the advancement of firefighters wishing to become chief officers or fire chief in their organization at some point in the future. In many fire departments, in the Midwest and the nation, now require a minimum of an associate degree in fire protection as a hiring requirement.

Training Report/Documentation

Following the Illinois Department of Labor inspection, the consultants were provided paper copies of training and attendance records that were generated to comply with the various violations noted in the report. The National Fire Protection Association has developed *NFPA 1401, Recommended Practice for Fire Service Training Reports and Records, 2017 edition* that outlines the requirements for reporting and documenting training activities. Reviewing the paper copies of the training reports from the required training to indicate compliance with the IL Department of Labor, it appears as though the information on the training report meets the requirement set forth in NFPA 1401. However, the consultant believes that

there exists the opportunity to dramatically improve the Department's training program through substantial compliance with the provisions of NFPA 1401, 2017 edition. These standards can be directly linked to the Department's records management system.

Recommendation – Training Program

- *The Mendota Fire Department must completely reevaluate their training program and provide regularly scheduled training in accordance with NFPA 1401, Guide for Fire Service Training Reports and Records, 2017 Edition. **Priority 2.***
- *The Department must develop a formal written training program to identify training needs, expectations, and outcomes. **Priority 2.***
- *Fire and EMS training is recorded in two different programs (Vector Solutions & Firehouse), only one program should be utilized to record fire and EMS training to record accurate training data. **Priority 1.***
- *Training for Mendota Fire and EMS personnel should be based on competency as established by national/industry standards or by the Mendota Fire Department. **Priority 2.***

Fire Prevention

Fire prevention activities historically have been driven for various reasons: interest in the public's and firefighters' safety, while other acts were profit-driven by insurance companies looking to reduce insurance claims. At one time insurance companies had special crews that responded alongside the fire departments to help mitigate, protect insured's belongings, and help to reduce the loss from fire; this is now a function of the fire department. Whatever the reason, everyone benefits when the loss from fires is reduced and even greater if fires can be prevented.

In Illinois, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is responsible for the fire inspection of all state-licensed day care, state-licensed group homes, and educational occupancies; OSFM fire prevention inspectors also help ensure safety through the initial inspection of aboveground tanks holding flammable and combustible liquids, and liquefied petroleum gas installations.

What is less clear is whether the OSFM requires local fire departments to conduct fire inspections in private's business and public residential properties. In a memorandum to all local municipal and governmental authorities, dated December 21, 2021, the OSFM offered the following guidance to local communities:

Although the Act (425, 1909) does not require Fire Chiefs or their designees to conduct routine fire inspections, it does require, at a minimum, that Fire Chiefs or their designees report safety violations when discovered and take appropriate enforcement action to address them, as necessary.

Notwithstanding the memorandum, Act 425 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes, section nine states:

"Subject to Section 9g, the Office, and the officers of cities, villages, towns, townships, municipalities, and fire protection districts charged with the duty of investigating fires or conducting fire prevention and life safety inspections under this Act, shall, under the direction of the Office, inspect and examine at reasonable hours, any premises, and the buildings and other structures thereon, and if, such dangerous condition or fire hazard is found to exist contrary to the rules herein referred to, or if a dangerous condition or fire hazard is found to exist as specified in the first paragraph of this Section, and the rules herein referred to are not applicable to such dangerous condition or fire hazard, shall identify the dangerous condition, and shall so notify the owner, occupant, or other person interested in the premises."

While the two documents appear to contradict each other, the requirements are, at best, ambiguous. While the consultants are not qualified to offer legal advice or opinions, it appears as though it may be in the best interest of the City for the Department to perform fire inspections. None the less, the City should seek guidance in this area from their attorney as to whether or not the Department should conduct fire safety inspections.

In discussing fire prevention inspections with the Fire Chief, the Department has not been conducting any fire inspections of properties in the City of Mendota for the past twenty years. The Fire Chief shared with the consultants that this subject was discussed with the City's Attorney and the Chief was directed not perform fire inspections on behalf of the City or Department. However, § 158.2 (F) of the Mendota Municipal Code requires the Fire Chief to enforce ordinances and conduct fire inspection to prevent the spread of fires and protect life and property of the City. The City's Municipal Code appears to be conflict with the City Attorney's instructions not to conduct fire inspections within the City.

The 2013 ISO report did not credit the Department with any points concerning their fire prevention inspections. It appears that the Department has not made any progress towards improving their inspection program.

The Department does have two parts, carbonless, "Fire Safety Inspection Checklist" that captures the basic information for a property and identifies many frequent violations of the State's Life Safety Code. There are signature lines for the fire inspector and business representative as well as a date for when the fire inspection was conducted.

It is interesting to note that the Illinois Department of Labor conducted an inspection of a fire department in Central Illinois after a structure fire left three firefighters hospitalized after they exited from the second floor of burning building and fell approximately 21 feet. In Illinois OSHA's report (Inspection #1531592, May 21, 2021) it listed a contributing factor to the firefighter injuries *"a lack of fire prevention code enforcement"* (emphasis added). Specifically, Illinois OSHA listed specifically the following recommendation to the municipality as a result of their investigation:

"Adopt and enforce a fire code such as NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (2015 edition). Fire protection through prevention is a highly effective method of reducing the risk of structure fires in a community. NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (2015 edition) was adopted by the State of Illinois through the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal."

Recommendation – Fire Inspections

- *The City should obtain a legal opinion concerning the Mendota Fire Department's role in conducting formal fire inspections in the City based on the provisions of Act 425. **Priority 2.***

Notwithstanding the advice of the City's attorney regarding inspections, the Department would be wise to develop a formal written fire prevention and inspection program. The program's contents should be based on the National Fire Protection Association's Standard, NFPA 1730, Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations, 2019 edition. There are many other aspects of fire prevention that the Mendota Fire Department can partake in, outside of inspections, that are beneficial to the community.

Recommendation – Fire Prevention Program

- *The Department should engage in the development of a formal written fire prevention program based on NFPA 1730, 2019 edition. **Priority 3.***

The State of Illinois has adopted the National Fire Protection Association's Life Safety Code, NFPA 101, 2015 edition for enforcement statewide. In reviewing the Mendota Municipal Code, the City has adopted the 2012 edition of the Life Safety Code. The City should amend its code to reflect the current edition of the State of Illinois Life Safety Code.

Recommendation – Life Safety Code

- *The City of Mendota should amend its Municipal Code to reflect the adoption of the most recent Life Safety Code as outlined by the State of Illinois, Office of the State Fire Marshal. **Priority 3.***

Pre-Incident Planning

There is no substitute for being prepared. Pre-incident planning is critical to safe and effective firefighting operations, particularly at industrial and manufacturing facilities. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) defines a Pre-Incident Plan as “a document developed by gathering general and detailed data that is used by responding personnel in effectively managing emergencies for the protection of occupants, responding personnel, property, and the environment.”

NFPA 1620 Standard for Pre-Incident Planning provides formal guidance for creating a comprehensive Pre-Incident Plan. The list below represents only a portion of the components listed in NFPA 1620:

- Location-address
- Owner and key holder contact information
- Occupancy information
- Access points keyed and forcible entry
- Special hazards
- Type of construction
- Available water supply
- Building protection systems and their location
- Utilities, including the location of shut offs
- Exposures
- Special resource considerations
- Technical rescue exposures
- Hazardous materials presence
- Particular life hazard issue
- The presence of lightweight trusses in construction

Incident pre-planning is an essential safety issue for the emergency responder; therefore, the information must be readily available to the incident commander, e.g., on the in-service computer in a command vehicle. In addition, incident pre-plans must become part of the training curriculum where all personnel are introduced to this information and how to utilize it. ISO requires, for maximum credit, that fire pre-plan site inspections should occur once a year.

A fire Department's pre-incident planning of commercial, institutional, multi-family residential (common areas), and industrial buildings is of great value to firefighting personnel safety. Pre-incident planning is an essential component of Firefighter training and readiness. Fire pre-incident planning programs are formal programs where the firefighting personnel familiarize themselves with the buildings they are expected to protect.

Pre-incident plan programs would include site visits to properties within the City of Mendota to gather information as to the hazards and problems that may occur in the event of an emergency such as a fire or explosion. These site visits allow the Firefighters to sketch the buildings and gather other pertinent

information about a structure that can be referenced directly or transmitted by radio if an emergency event occurs in the structure.

All such information goes back to the fire station for further development and dissemination. At some point in time, all commercial structures should have a pre-incident plan for reference when/if the need arises. The best method to educate all members as to the hazards of the buildings they might enter to fight a fire is to include pre-incident planning as part of the training curriculum of the Department. This training should include an entire crew's (including part-time and Paid-on-Call personnel) walk-through of high-risk buildings.

The most significant benefit of fire pre-incident plans is Firefighter safety. Conventional wisdom would suggest that when a Firefighter is about to enter a building for life safety or fire suppression purposes, knowledge of that building is beneficial to the member; it is also advantageous to the business itself in that it could result in quicker extinguishment and less property damage.

The Mendota Fire Department does not have a formal written pre-incident planning program, nor does the Department have any pre-incident plans. The Department should develop a formal written pre-incident planning program and implement utilizing all Mendota Fire personnel.

Recommendation – Pre-Incident Planning

- *A formal written Pre-Incident Planning program should be developed based on the requirements of NFPA 1620. **Priority 2***
- *All commercial, industrial, public assembly, healthcare, schools, and significant residential buildings should have a pre-incident plan. A schedule of buildings to be planned should be developed and updated on a routine basis. **Priority 2.***

Fiscal/Capital Analysis

This section will analyze the financial position of the City of Mendota providing a detailed analysis of revenues and expenses including the operating and capital budgets of the Mendota Fire Department. The information and data utilized in this analysis includes primarily the review of the City of Mendota as well as the Fire Department's budgets for the years 2019-2021. The consultants did receive some 2022 financial data. The report focused primarily on the fiscal years 2019 to 2021; however, some of the 2022 data was utilized for revenue analysis and to highlight certain areas in expenditures to identify trends, etc. The reader should also note that the figures used for 2022 are unaudited figures and may change over time.

The City of Mendota's budget supports the day-to-day operations of the City. The fiscal budget year for the City of Mendota is May 1st to April 30th. The City's budget is comprised of three primary types of funds which consist of:

- *Governmental Funds - the general fund is contained in the Governmental Fund and the revenues and operating budgets for all departments are contained in this fund.*
- *Proprietary Funds - are used to account for operations that function similar to a private business. The cost of providing services is financed entirely through user charges such as water and sewer services.*
- *Fiduciary Funds – A fund used to report money held in a trust that cannot be used to support a municipalities own program, typical pension funds fall into this category.*

Budget Development

The City of Mendota's operating budget is on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30th. The Clerk's office has the primary responsibility for compiling the budget and sends out budget development information typically in January of each year. Department Heads are asked to submit their recommendations for their budget and meetings between Department Heads and the City's Finance Committee are held in February and/or March so that the City's budget can be formalized and adopted in April prior to the start of the fiscal year. The Finance Committee reviews the requests of the Department Heads and thus decides what programs can and should be funded. This meeting is used by Department Heads to justify their specific requests and to address any questions from the Finance Committee members or Mayor/council members who may be present.

In reviewing the Fire Chief's request for specific budget items over the past several budgets, the consultants noted that they are a number of requests from the Fire Chief ranging from ambulances, additional staffing, wage increases for personnel, carpet, tires, fire apparatus, software and hardware, body armor, and various miscellaneous items. Many of these items (i.e., carpet, tires) can and should be contained within the Department's operating budget under maintenance and other associated line items

while larger cost items (i.e., apparatus) should be request through a more formal process. These smaller cost items should be included in the regular maintenance budgets and the Fire Chief should budget accordingly. These requests do not rise to the level of separate requests unless required by budget rules established by the Mendota City Council.

Fire Department leadership should know when tires are in need of replacement and create a replacement cycle that can be included into the maintenance budget so that tires can be replaced on a yearly basis for all apparatus rather than making a separate line-item request by specific year. This is true for routine safety and health compliance costs such as self-contained breathing apparatus testing, pump testing, ladder testing, etc. Using data will result in a more accurate budget forecasting as well as improved budget preparation. Normal wear and tear items (i.e., carpet) should be included in the maintenance budgets as well for buildings. This is a function of good budgeting and having a sound multi-year financial plan within the Fire Department to address the maintenance needs of apparatus, equipment, and buildings.

Typically, larger cost items are dealt with through a formal capital budget process. The process involves defining what a capital item should be, (vehicles, building projects, major equipment purchases over \$10,000.00, etc.) and having Department Heads submit their requests to the Council/Clerk. The Council deliberates and make decisions based on factors that include but are not limited to funding available, justification of need, and community priorities. The capital budget generally provides planned purchases for a five-year period so that the Council understands the needs of various departments as well as the potential tax impact for future budget years. Each year the plan is updated to reflect any changes in priorities or funding issues that may arise. A formal capital budget program provides for transparency for the public, City Departments and Council; an additional benefit is that the Council gains a much better understanding regarding the future needs of the Department and community and allows for improved planning. A formal capital improvements budget will allow Department Heads to better plan their Departments with respect to major purchases. This would be especially true for the Mendota Fire Department. A mayor once said that “without a formal capital improvement program, department heads simply throw everything at the wall to see what sticks”!

Concerning the request for ambulances and fire apparatus, the Department has ample data that should accompany budget requests that would better justify or prioritize requests. The Fire Department collects a large of amount of data; however, this data is not used in the daily operations of the Department nor in the fiscal management of the Department. For example, based on the data the Department has an average cost per hour or mile can be calculated to determine cost per mile of operation for ambulances and hours for fire apparatus. Particular ambulance(s) or fire apparatus that are consistently higher in their operating costs should be targeted for replacement and/or placement in reserve status. This data can and should be utilized and fully explained to Council members and in requesting ambulance or apparatus replacement.

Recommendation – Data Use in Fiscal Management

- *The Fire Department should incorporate the use of data into its fiscal operating plans to improve the budget preparation and forecasting of anticipated costs. **Priority 2.***

Recommendation – Establishment of a Capital Improvement Program

- *The City of Mendota should establish a formal capital improvement (CIP) plan for major purchases of vehicles and equipment. The CIP plan can greatly aid the Council and Department Heads in planning for larger purchases of vehicles and equipment. **Priority 3.***

Fire/Ambulance Expenditures

As a starting point concerning fiscal resources for the Fire Department, the consultants were concerned with comments regarding the perception that the Fire Department has been under funded. The consultants looked at this issue from the perspective of what funding was requested by the Fire Chief and what level of funding was provided from the Council in reference to the fire and ambulance budgets. Specifically, the consultants looked at the operating budgets for Fire and Ambulance operations. These costs exclude items such as large equipment purchases (i.e., SCBA), major building improvements, and apparatus such as fire trucks and ambulances. The following table compares what the Fire Chief has requested in his operating budget (fire and ambulance) as to what was actually approved by the City Council.

Table 39: Budget Comparison 2019-2022

Mendota Operating Budgets Requested/Approved				
	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Fire Chief Request	\$1,161,576.00	\$1,220,287.00	\$1,161,578.00	\$1,259,776.00
Council Approved	\$1,061,576.00	\$1,220,287.00	\$1,247,331.00	\$1,259,776.00
Difference	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	(\$85,753.00)	\$0.00

For fiscal year 2019 the reader will note that the Fire Chief's request was approximately \$100,000.00 higher than what was approved by the Council. This difference represents the reduction in Medicare/Medicaid, ambulance write-offs, etc. which were reduced to zero by the City's auditors. Neither the Clerk nor the Fire Chief prepares any budgetary numbers for this section of the ambulance budget. For fiscal year 2021 the Council added additional funding to the Fire Chief's request; however, again, some of these funds were adjustments to the ambulance budget by the City's auditor for Medicare/Medicaid and ambulance write-offs. If the Department finds that it is overspending in one line item such as maintenance, then additional funding should be requested through the budget process. Any significant increases should be compared to historical data and the Department should be fully prepared to explain why additional the funding is required.

The financial data reveals that the Department is not underfunded, it is funded at the amounts that the Fire Chief requests. It is noted that the Fire Department exceeded its operating budget in fiscal years 2019 and 2020.

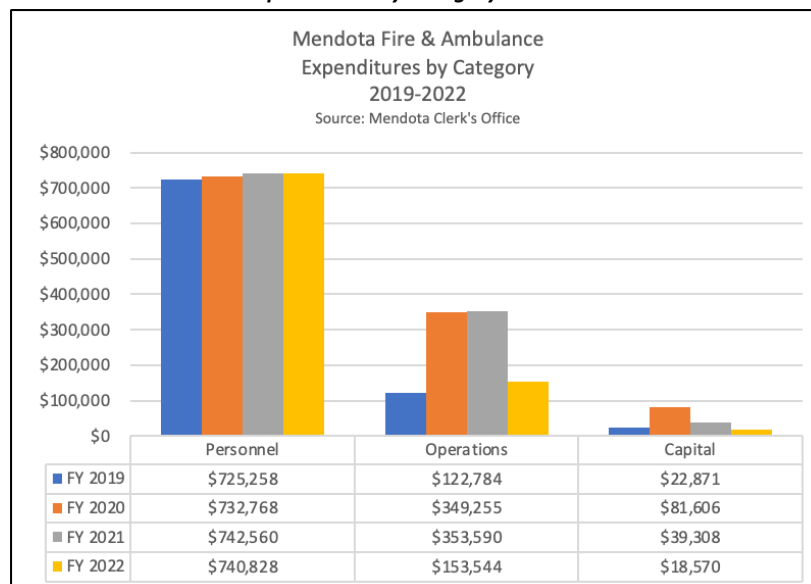
The Fire Department's budget is broken down into two cost centers for expenditures, fire, and ambulance expenditures. Within those two cost centers are subcategories that can be summarized in three main categories, personnel, operational, and capital expenditures. For the purposes of this report, the consultants classified personnel costs as the following: all salaries and wages, overtime, pension, medical and protective clothing/uniforms. Operational expenditures included all other categories except the line of capital outlay. The following table summarizes the combined expenditures in both the fire and ambulance budgets by category.

Table 40: Mendota Fire and Ambulance Expenditures by Category

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Personnel	\$725,258	\$732,768	\$742,560	\$740,828
Operations	\$122,784	\$349,255	\$353,590	\$153,544
Capital	\$22,871	\$81,606	\$39,308	\$18,570
Totals	\$870,913	\$1,163,629	\$1,135,458	\$912,942

Regarding personnel costs, there was a total increase in salary, wages, and benefits of 2.1% over the time period. Concerning operational costs, there was a significant increase in costs for the Department in fiscal year 2020 as compared to the subsequent years. This was primarily because nothing was budgeted in the Medicaid and Medicare write offs accounts in the ambulance budget as compared to the following fiscal years. These costs continued to rise for fiscal years 2020 through 2022. Maintenance and communications cost are the largest expenditures in the Department's operations. The total Fire and Ambulance budgets increased 4.8%. The following chart illustrates the personnel, operations, and capital expenditures of the Department for the fiscal years of 2019-2021.

Chart 20: Mendota Fire Expenditures by Category



Overall, the Mendota Fire Department's budget reflects the typical fire department budget whereas personnel cost increase and operational budgets stay relatively flat or decrease to offset rising personnel costs. The ambulance operational budget is heavily influenced by the Medicare/Medicaid and ambulance write-offs; again, the Fire Chief nor the Clerk's Office do not supply these number for the budget. These numbers are entered by the City's auditors. Looking at the Department's budget closer reveals that the City of Mendota spends approximately 17.2% of its general fund on fire and ambulance services. The following table provides the reader with the percentage of expenditures of the general fund for the fiscal years 2019-2021.

Table 41: Percentage of General Fund Expenditures for Fire and Ambulance Services

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
General Fund	\$5,399,974	\$5,877,118	\$6,240,818	\$6,236,178
Fire/Amb	\$870,913	\$1,163,629	\$1,135,458	\$912,942
Percentage	16.1%	19.8%	18.2%	14.6%

Concerning wages, the table below looks more closely at the wages of the various employment classes in the Department.

Table 42: Wages by Employee Type FY2019-FY2021

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Full-Time	\$339,342	\$329,956	\$380,248	\$355,358
Part-Time	\$4,136	\$1,549	\$2,947	\$2,242
Paid-on-Call	\$48,384	\$40,636	\$2,947	\$20,291
Totals	\$391,862	\$372,141	\$386,142	\$377,891

The wages of full-time personnel, exclusive of overtime, have varied over the four years. This appears to be influenced by the timing of vacancies in full time positions throughout the fiscal year. The money saved from not being at full staff during the fiscal year is referred to as salary savings. Overall, the wages for full-time staff increased approximately 4.7% over the four-year period.

Wages for part-time staff varied considerably over the same period, most likely due to the amount of use by part-time personnel filling in for the full-time staff. Overall wages for part-time staff fell 45.8% for the four-year period.

Finally wages for paid-on-call employees decreased by 58.1%. Wages for paid-on-call personnel included pay for emergency fire and ambulance responses, training wages, and salary for being on call. Again, the frequency of personnel responding to emergencies, attending training, and being on call drive these numbers from year to year. Based on the wage numbers for paid-on-call personnel, the effectiveness of the paid-on-call program is declining and should be supported as per the recommendations regarding the recruitment and retention recommendations.

Globally, all wages fell 3.6% during the four fiscal years.

Overtime is typically another source of concern in most fire department budgets; the following table illustrates the overtime in the Mendota Fire Department for FY 2019 – FY 2021.

Table 43: Overtime Costs MFD

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Overtime	\$166,399	\$159,178	\$118,834	\$157,937

Overtime usages is directly correlated to the usage of sick leave, vacation, injury, shift vacancies and other approved leaves by full-time personnel. Not having adequate numbers of full-time staff typically results in higher overtime costs. Overtime generally has an inverse relationship to full-time salaries and that seems to be case for the Mendota Fire Department. Where full-time salaries decreased (as a result of vacancies), overtime has increased. While overtime costs decreased from FY 2019 to FY 2022 (5.1%), the amount of overtime for six full-time personnel is excessive. The consultants believe this level of overtime usage is directly related to not having adequate staffing and having the fire chief's position as member of the normal work shift. This issue was previously discussed in the staffing section of this report.

Fire/Ambulance Revenues

The City's ambulance rates, and additional charges are set forth in § 29-2 of the Mendota Municipal Code. It is interesting to note that great discretion is delegated to the Fire Chief in § 29-2 (B) (2) regarding the billing of ambulance charges. Specifically, § 29-2 (B) (2) states: "*All charges are at the discretion of the Fire Chief.*" (emphasis added). Per this ordinance the Fire Chief has complete discretion as to whether or not an individual is charged all or a portion of the charges associated with an ambulance call(s). According to the ordinance there is no recourse by the Council should the Fire Chief not charge, or dismiss, charges to any individual who has received emergency medical service charges from the Fire Department. Nor does the ordinance state that the Fire Chief be required to notify the Council if some charges were not to be billed. Typically, this "discretion" is a function of the Council's and not delegated to the Fire Chief. The consultants understand that the Mendota City Council has already addressed this particular issue in a recent ordinance change.

Recommendation - § 29-2 Ambulance Service Base Rates

- § 29-2 (B)(2) should be revised to give the discretion regarding ambulance billing to the Council rather than delegating this responsibility to the Fire Chief. **Priority 2.**

New ambulance rates were adopted by the Mendota Common Council at their meeting of January 17, 2022, meeting. The table below summarizes the revenues, by category, for the Mendota Fire Department.

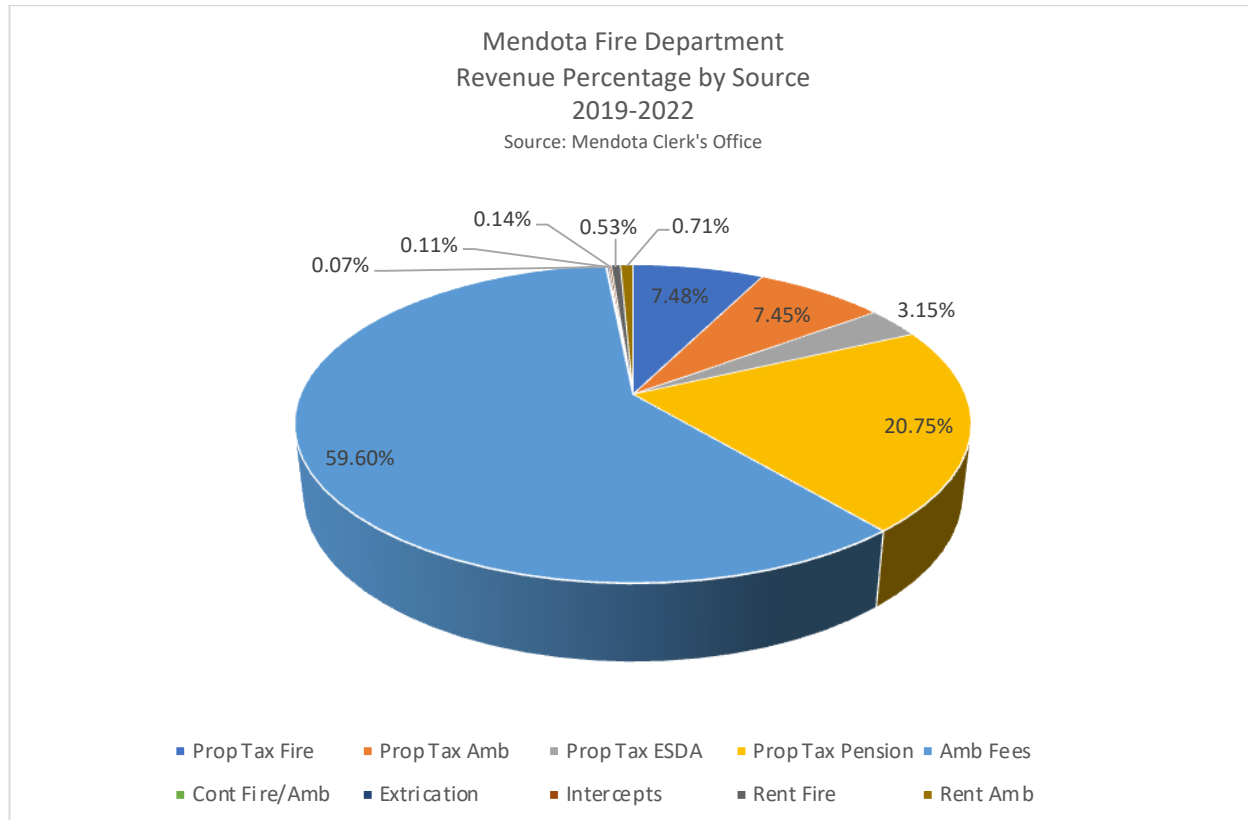
Table 44: Mendota Fire Revenues by Categories

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	Totals
Prop Tax Fire	\$55,330	\$55,544	\$56,920	\$62,424	\$230,218

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	Totals
Prop Tax Amb	\$54,338	\$55,544	\$56,920	\$62,424	\$229,226
Prop Tax ESDA	\$11,968	\$11,970	\$37,952	\$35,005	\$96,895
Prop Tax Pension	\$133,612	\$169,484	\$166,062	\$169,195	\$638,353
Amb Fees	\$246,638	\$449,900	\$587,454	\$550,000	\$1,833,992
Contract Fire/Amb	\$1,154	\$0	\$0	\$1,000	\$2,154
Extrication	\$0	\$812	\$1,638	\$1,000	\$3,450
Intercepts	\$0	\$587	\$2,723	\$1,000	\$4,310
Rent Fire	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$16,400
Rent Amb	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$22,000
Totals	\$512,640	\$753,441	\$919,269	\$891,648	\$3,076,998

The following chart displays the percentage of revenues by category for the Mendota Fire Department for fiscal years 2019-2022

Table 45: Percentage of Revenues by Source



Currently property taxes account for approximately 91% of the funding of the Department. Looking at the Department's revenues in a more global perspective the following table provides the Department's revenue as a percentage of total revenues for the City of Mendota. Overall, the Fire Department's percentage of revenues averaged 8.9% of the general fund revenues over the four-year period.

Table 46: Fire Department Revenues as Percent of General Fund

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
General Fund	\$5,399,974	\$5,877,118	\$6,942,231	\$7,151,644
Fire/Amb	\$512,640	\$753,441	\$919,269	\$891,648
Percentage	9.5%	12.8%	13.2%	12.5%

Fire and Ambulance Contracts

The City of Mendota has been providing the rural area with fire protection since 1946. The consultants are not sure when the City began providing ambulance services; however, charges for ambulance services appear in revenue documents beginning in fiscal year 1979. There exists a contract for fire protection and ambulance services between the City and the Rural District, however, no one in the City has been able to locate a copy of the contracts. The Rural District currently pays the City of Mendota approximately \$4,100 per year for fire protection and approximately \$5,500.00 per year for ambulance service. The following table outlines the payment from 2019 to 2021 along with the projections for the fiscal year 2022.

Table 47: Rural Fire and Ambulance Charges

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Rent Fire	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$4,100
Rent Ambulance	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500

The charges have not been adjusted for many years. In reviewing financial documents provided to the consultants, the charges for fire protection have been set at \$4,100.00 since 1997. From 1984 to 1997 the Rural Fire District paid the City of Mendota \$6,000.00 per year. One potential explanation for the decrease was that the City annexed portions of the District's territory so therefore the City reduced its charges for services based on the loss of square miles and population.

Regarding ambulance service charges the fees are more difficult to identify in earlier budget documents. The fees range between \$1,000.00 and \$5,500 dollars per year dating back to fiscal year 1979. The fee of \$5,500.00 shows up consistently since 1990.

The bottom line is that the fees that the City is charging the Rural District for fire and ambulance services are extremely low as compared to the costs to provide those services. The charges for services must be increased to reflect the cost of providing these services to the Rural District. The fees charged must be reviewed each year to determine the costs of providing services and adjusted if needed.

With no contract available, the City has no idea of what its responsibilities and protections are with regard to providing fire and ambulance services to the Rural District. The District must either find the existing agreements or negotiate new agreements for fire and ambulance services. Essentially the City would be starting over concerning service delivery to the Rural District.

Recommendation – Fire and Ambulance Contracts/Fees

- *The City of Mendota must negotiate new agreements for fire and ambulance services with the Rural District for the providing of fire and ambulance services based on the cost of providing these services. **Priority 1.***
- *The Mendota City Council must increase the fees that it charges the Rural District for fire and ambulances services to reflect the current delivery of these services taking into consideration personnel, overhead, apparatus, equipment, and supply costs. **Priority 2.***

Another option available to the City is to consider whether or not the City should continue to provide fire services to the Rural District. The expenses that the City would save as compared to the revenue currently charged is greater than \$4,100.00. While the City gains a benefit to having a pumper respond to fires in the City and can use that pumper for its ISO classification, its loss in the ISO classification would not have a significant, if any, impact on insurers in the City. Concerning the ISO classification, the Department could improve in other areas, such as training, in gaining points that may be lost by no longer counting the Troy Grove Mendota Fire Protection District's pumper. The City would realize a reduction of approximately 150 calls per year on personnel, wear and tear on apparatus and equipment, fewer overlapping calls. Other cost reductions would be in the areas of wages for volunteer and part-time staff as a result of fewer annual calls.

The consultants would not recommend discontinuing ambulance services to the Rural District and a new contract must be developed along with appropriate fees.

Renegotiating of contracts for fire and ambulance services should provide additional funding to offset cost increases due to the reorganization of the Department and additional firefighters.

Ambulance Revenue

The City contracts with Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing Incorporated (NIAB) to bill for all charges that the Department bills out to EMS patients as well as other charges issued by the Department. Using a third party for billing is more cost effective and efficient than the City attempting to perform this service.

Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing has a contract with the City of Mendota for billing that was signed on February 08, 2022 and covers a four-year period. Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing receives approximately 6.5% of the charges collected. The contract provides for NIAB will provide a monthly and credit report to the Department. The consultants also noted that throughout the contract, the "Department" is used for all billing, reporting, and correspondence. Typically accounting principles would recommend that City would be the recipient of all reports, correspondence, etc. as a check and balance on the billing and reporting. The consultants would recommend that this change be made, and the monthly and credit report be shared with the Council so that they gain knowledge regarding the billing and revenue performance of the Fire Department's ambulance transport program.

Recommendation – Ambulance Billing Summaries

- *The City Administration should be the primary contact for the Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing rather than the Fire Department. **Priority 3.***
- *City Administration should receive the monthly charge and credit reports from Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing, Inc. rather than the Fire Department. **Priority 3.***

The following table illustrates the number of advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) calls from 2019-2021.

Table 48: ALS Versus BLS Calls - Source: Northern Billing

Transport Type	Transports	% of Total
ALS Transports	689	43.09%
BLS Transport	910	56.91%
Totals	1,599	100.00%

Northern billing only billed for six paramedic intercepts for the same time period. While there are more BLS than ALS calls, ALS calls accounted for the greatest amount of revenue for the Department.

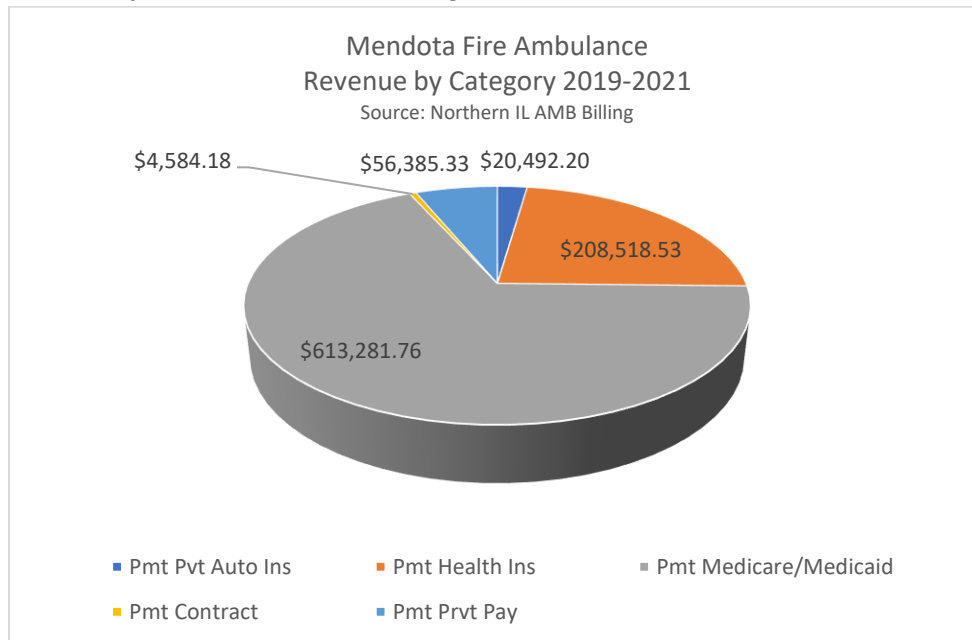
The following table demonstrates the breakdown of patients transported by the Fire Department from 2019-2021. Resident includes those persons transported that live in the contracted areas that the Fire Department services.

Table 49: Resident Versus Non-Resident Transports - Source: Northern Billing

Transport Type	Transports	% of Total
Resident	1,613	86.21%
Non-Resident	258	13.79%
Total	1,871	100.00%

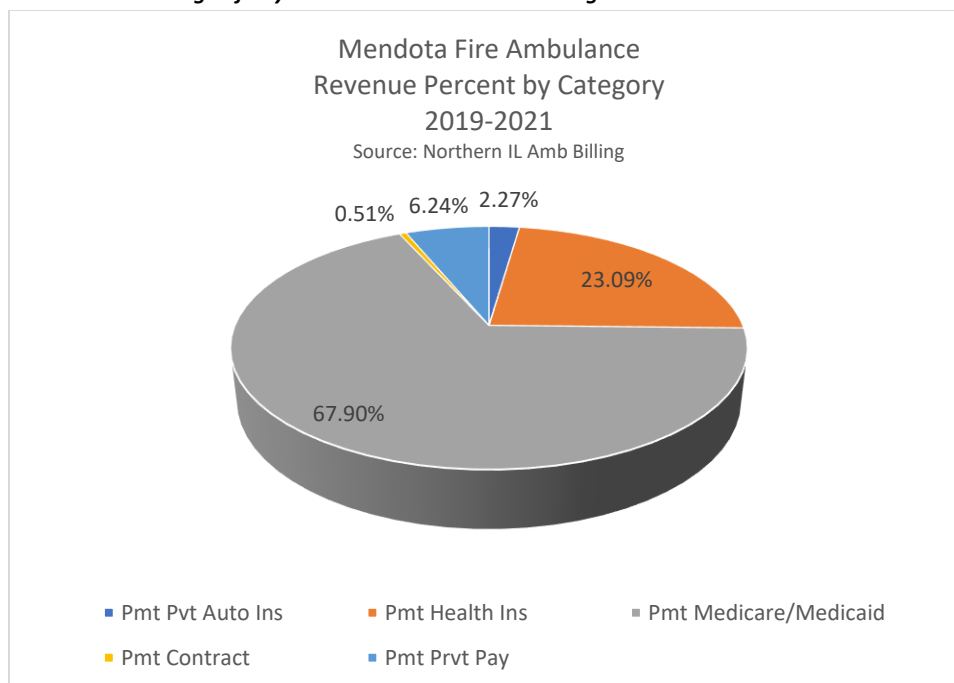
Regarding payer mix, the largest payors for EMS transports from the Mendota Fire Department comes from Medicare and Medicaid and the least amount of revenue comes from contract payments. The following chart provides the payer mix over from 2019-2021.

Chart 21: Payor Mix - Source: Northern Billing



The following chart shows the payor mix as percentages.

Chart 22: Percentage of Payor Mix - Source Northern Billing



Concerning collections, the City's collection rate for charges for fire and ambulance charges is approximately 56.8%. The following table shows the total charges and revenue collected for 2019-2021.

The losses from billing are what the City's auditors allocate to the ambulance budget yearly. The losses are made up through the taxes that the City levies for ambulance services.

Table 50: Revenues Versus Charges 2019-2021

Revenues/Charges	Amount	Coll. Rate
Total Revenue	\$903,262.00	56.84%
Total Charges	\$1,589,100.35	
Over (Under)	(\$685,838.35)	

Overall, the City's ambulance billing is very typical of most municipal fire departments that provide transport services. The City's collection rate of 56.8% is in line with other communities, regardless of population or geographic area.

Summary of Recommendations

City of Mendota - Recommendation Priority		
Priority	Topic	Recommendation
1	Apparatus Staffing	Fire Department leadership must ensure that no member works greater than 48 consecutive hours if called back to fill a vacancy
1	Compensation Compliance	Include paid on call personnel into the bi-weekly payroll process, which must include all on-call payments for each pay period
1	Compensation Compliance	Ensure paid on call is listed as a classification within the 28-day work period cycle for overtime calculations
1	Conflict Resolution	The Council must address the issues between the Fire Chief and the Mayor regarding their differences. It is recommended that a professional facilitator be contracted and that the Council and Department membership be involved in the discussions and teamwork development
1	Contracts/Fees	The City of Mendota must negotiate new agreements for fire and ambulance services with the Rural District for the providing of fire and ambulance services based on the cost of providing these services
1	Department Reorganization	Review all residency requirements for consistency between and within classifications
1	Department Reorganization	The position of fire chief is recommended to be removed from the shift schedule and the position based on a forty-hour work week. This should be an exempt position with regard to overtime and be provided with clerical support
1	Department Reorganization	The duties and responsibilities of the position of fire chief should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and appropriate changes made. This change should be made on conjunction with the preceding recommendation
1	Employee Safety & Health	The Fire chief must ensure that the IL Department of Labor's safety and health standards are properly adhered to on an annual basis and that all employees are trained and held accountable in their use
1	Employee Safety & Health	The City of Mendota must ensure that adequate funding is provided to the Department for compliance with the Illinois Department of Labor's safety and health standards
1	Fair Labor Standard Act	Develop a written policy confirming a 28-day work period in accordance with 7(k) for overtime calculations for fire positions
1	Fire Department Data	The Department and the City need to find a successor program for the Department's records management program which will be discontinued at the end of 2022. This program must interface with VALCOM's CAD computer. The RMS must interface directly with IVRD CAD program
1	Fire Department Policies	Fire Department administration must engage in a formal process to develop Department policies, in conjunction with employees (as required by the collective bargaining agreement), that are based on national standards and accepted industry standards
1	Fire Department Policies	Fire Department policies must be developed using a common template that include an approval signature of Fire Department leadership, approval date, revision date, if applicable, and numbering system
1	Fire Department Policies	Fire Department leadership must have a common dissemination process of all policies to employees. Policies must be available in written and electronic format for ease of access by personnel at the fire station or via the worldwide web. Employees should sign for all Department policies indicating that they have received the policies and read them
1	Fire Department Policies	Fire Department leadership must provide approved training on the policies of the Department and ensure that the training is documented through approved training reports
1	Regional Dispatch	Provide for dispatching of fire and EMS departments and have the capability to interface with fire and EMS records management software programs
1	Regional Dispatch	The CAD software system must have the capability to fulfill the reporting requirements of NFPA 1221 regarding call answering data, call processing data, fire and EMS turnout time data, and response time data. These reports should be generated and provided to fire and EMS departments for review
1	Regional Dispatch	Capability to track individual fire and EMS units and record various times associated with these units

City of Mendota - Recommendation Priority		
Priority	Topic	Recommendation
1	Regional Dispatch	The CAD software system must have the capability of capturing additional data elements such as patient side times, and fire on water time
1	Performance Evaluation	The Council should conduct a performance evaluation process to establish written expectations and routine feedback for the Fire Chief to assist to facilitate successful management of the Department and relations between the Chief, the Council and Mayor. The City must commit to the Fire Chief the needed resources and support for the Fire Chief to be successful in meeting the provisions of the performance expectations
1	Personnel Policies	The City should implement barriers for nepotism concerns as outlined in the report. These should be provided to the impacted employees in writing
1	Personnel Policies	The City is recommended to have a legal review of the service agreement for ambulance billing for potential conflict of interest or ethics concerns
1	Recruitment	The Department should include the recruitment of paid-on-call personnel and full-time personnel into the City's recruitment strategy
1	Recruitment	Update the Full-time and Paid-on-Call employment applications and background documents as outlined in the report
1	Training Center	The training center and rapid intervention training building must be designed, constructed, and operated using approved engineering practices and in accordance with NFPA 1402
1	Training Program	Fire and EMS training is recorded in two different programs (Vector Solutions & Firehouse), only one program should be utilized to record fire and EMS training to record accurate training data
2	Ambulance Base Rate	§ 29-2 (B)(2) should be revised to give the discretion regarding ambulance billing to the Council rather than delegating this responsibility to the Fire Chief
2	Apparatus Staffing	The City should conduct a study of paid time to ensure its current benefit is market competitive and aligned with the current workforce demands
2	Apparatus Staffing	The City should review the current policies in place for non-union personnel to ensure accruals and maximums are consistently followed
2	Contracts/Fees	The Mendota City Council must increase the fees that it charges the Rural District for fire and ambulances services to reflect the current delivery of these services taking into consideration personnel, overhead, apparatus, equipment, and supply costs
2	Data Fiscal Management	The Fire Department should incorporate the use of data into its fiscal operating plans to improve the budget preparation and forecasting of anticipated costs
2	Department Reorganization	The City is recommended to conduct a market analysis of comparators to set the salary of the position of Fire Chief and Lieutenant
2	Department Reorganization	The City is recommended to calculate a 3–5-year overtime average to add to the base salary so future salary is commensurate with historical salary
2	Department Reorganization	The City should eliminate the position of Assistant Chief
2	Department Reorganization	It is recommended that the City create the position of lieutenant/shift commander (one per shift) and these positions report directly to the Fire Chief. This position would be responsible for the shift activities and emergency response
2	Fire Department Data	The Department must use its data to management the day-to-day operations of the Department as well as planning for its short term and long-term service delivery
2	Fire Department Policies	Fire Department leadership must review all policies yearly and update or revise policies based on changes in national standards or industry practices. Employees should be involved in the review of the policies
2	Fire Inspections	The City should obtain a legal opinion concerning the Mendota Fire Department's role in conducting formal fire inspections in the City based on the provisions of Act 425
2	Firefighter Staffing	The City should hire one additional firefighter per shift (3) bringing the total of the new structure of the Department to ten full-time positions
2	HR/Management Training	Develop job descriptions to incorporate the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position
2	Regional Dispatch	The IRVD must incorporate a quality assurance program to ensure that the data that is captured is consistent with the data that local departments collect in terms of content and count

City of Mendota - Recommendation Priority		
Priority	Topic	Recommendation
2	Paid-on-Call Program	The City Mendota should invest in the creation of a Length of Service Awards Program as a recruitment and retention tool for paid-on-call firefighters
2	Personnel Records	Ensure all active and inactive personnel files are maintained with the City's personnel files. Departments should only maintain supervisory files on active employees
2	Police & Fire Commission	The City's policies and Department SOG's should be written to incorporate the responsibilities of the FPC per existing Rules and Regulations dated 12/22/2020
2	Pre-Incident Planning	A formal written Pre-Incident Planning program should be developed based on the requirements of NFPA 1620
2	Pre-Incident Planning	All commercial, industrial, public assembly, healthcare, schools, and significant residential buildings should have a pre-incident plan. A schedule of buildings to be planned should be developed and updated on a routine basis
2	Recruitment	Ensure BFPC members are trained/educated on operational and human resources perspectives and understand the preferred qualities in applicants
2	Recruitment	Formally incorporate the Fire Chief into the BFPC interviewing processes to allow for the inclusion of subject matter experts
2	Recruitment	Consider removing applicant fees or provide for a reimbursement to eliminate this employment barrier
2	Recruitment	Develop standardized written templates for applicant communications
2	Recruitment	Ensure all recruitment, interview, and testing records for full time and paid-on-call is provided to the City Clerk's Office, as the official records custodian for the City. This is to include all no-hires
2	Recruitment	Review the Range of Motion test provided to paid-on-call candidates is substantially related to the duties of the position, is valid, and is not a barrier to employment with the City
2	Training Program	The Mendota Fire Department must completely reevaluate their training program and provide regularly scheduled training in accordance with NFPA 1401, Guide for Fire Service Training Reports and Records, 2017 Edition
2	Training Program	The Department must develop a formal written training program to identify training needs, expectations, and outcomes
2	Training Program	Training for Mendota Fire and EMS personnel should be based on competency as established by national/industry standards or by the Mendota Fire Department
3	Ambulance Billing	The City Administration should be the primary contact for the Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing rather than the Fire Department
3	Ambulance Billing	City Administration should receive the monthly charge and credit reports from Northern Illinois Ambulance Billing, Inc. rather than the Fire Department
3	Ambulance Remount	The City and Fire Department of Mendota should consider remounting ambulance bodies on their ambulances utilizing the preceding guidelines and information in the above table
3	Apparatus Records	All apparatus records must meet the criteria as define in NFPA 1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles, 2017 Edition and NFPA 1915, Standard for Fire Apparatus Preventive Maintenance Program, 2000 Edition
3	Apparatus Staffing	The City should track overtime paid for time off, injuring, training, or vacancy
3	Capital Improvement Plan	The City of Mendota should establish a formal capital improvement (CIP) plan for major purchases of vehicles and equipment. The CIP plan can greatly aid the Council and Department Heads in planning for larger purchases of vehicles and equipment
3	Department Reorganization	Article IV of the Mendota Municipal Code should be eliminated and the duties that are relevant should be distributed among other appropriate positions throughout the City
3	Fair Labor Standard Act	The City should track and pay FLSA overtime, apart from regular overtime, through a separate line item in the Fire Department's budget for transparency and the City's ability to analyze overtime usage and strategize reduction options
3	Fire Department Data	The Department would benefit from a data quality assurance program to maintain data integrity
3	Fire Department Data	All Department personnel should be trained in data entry requirements for all records that the Department maintains

City of Mendota - Recommendation Priority		
Priority	Topic	Recommendation
3	Fire Department Data	The Mayor and City Council should discuss with the Fire Chief the data it finds useful, and the Fire Chief should provide monthly reports to the Mayor and Common Council
3	Fire Prevention Program	The Department should engage in the development of a formal written fire prevention program based on NFPA 1730, 2019 edition
3	Life Safety Code	The City of Mendota should amend its Municipal Code to reflect the adoption of the most recent Life Safety Code as outlined by the State of Illinois, Office of the State Fire Marshal
3	Paid-on-Call Program	The Fire Chief, in conjunction with POCs and full-time personnel, should develop and implement minimum participation response and training requirement for all POCs. Included should be opportunities for POCs who do not meet minimum requirements the opportunity to meet the standards before being separated from the Department
3	Personnel Policies	Update the City's Employee Handbook for compliance and best practices and indicate City's policy supersedes all department policies, if conflicting
3	Personnel Policies	Review SOGs to ensure no conflicts exist between City and Department policy topics and amend, as necessary
3	Personnel Policies	Provide all policies to employees and require a written acknowledgement of receipt
3	Personnel Records	Officers should be trained on the contents and legality of supervisory files
3	Public Safety Committee	§ 13.-10 (B) regarding the public safety committee should be eliminated from the Mendota Municipal code to reflect the actual practice in effect
3	Station #1	A site evaluation should be conducted by a qualified architect to determine if the recommendation made in this report can be incorporated into the existing footprint of the current fire station location
3	Station #1	The station should be remodeled or replaced taking into consideration of the recommendations in this report as well as other industry standards for fire and EMS facilities
4	HR/Management Training	The City should develop a basic performance evaluation instrument for the Department. The instrument should outline basic performance expectations of every employee and establish professional and/or organizational goals for the upcoming year
4	HR/Management Training	Develop an ongoing performance evaluation process for new employees
4	HR/Management Training	All evaluating officers should be trained in performance management and how to conduct performance evaluations
4	Municipal Code	The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to remove the reference to the Director of the Mendota Ambulance Service if this position no longer exists
4	Municipal Code	The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to remove volunteers and include paid-on-call, who are classified as employees
4	Municipal Code	The Mendota Municipal Code should be amended to reflect the position of Firefighter and allow the City to identify its responsibilities as an Engineer and medical status in an updated job description, so it may change as the department/city's needs change
5	Accreditation	The Department should not seek international accreditation (CFAI) at this juncture; rather, the CFAI performance indicators and core competencies should be utilized as a model for quality and a benchmark for examining and evaluating current practices
5	HR/Management Training	Incorporate an Assessment Center process into the Fire Department promotional process
5	HR/Management Training	Performance evaluations should be provided formally and at least annually and include discussion of the needs of the employee in order to ensure the organization is meeting them; thus, the employee understands that not only is he or she beneficial to the organization but that the Department is concerned about his or her individual needs
5	ISO	An ISO classification of Class 04 is an excellent rating. However, the Consultants do not believe any additional resources or fiscal commitment should be made to reduce the classification. Rather, the City/departments should attempt to maintain the Class 04 rating in the future
5	NFPA 1720	The City should not adopt NFPA 1720. Adoption would include the adoption of all OSHA and NFPA standards by reference. However, a plan should be developed to meet as many standards as possible in the future

City of Mendota - Recommendation Priority		
Priority	Topic	Recommendation
5	Station #2	<i>If the station is remodeled or has a change in use, the building should be updated with an off-site monitored automatic fire sprinkler and smoke detection systems</i>