Agenda Summary
October 21, 2026

Agenda Item No. B-1
FY'28 Preliminary Budget Discussion

Summary: This time has been set aside for the Manager to provide the Selectboard with a preliminary assessment of macro-anticipated fiscal demands likely to impact the FY'28 Budget and to receive input from the Selectboard prior to preparing the draft budget for your consideration.

Staff have historically delivered a budget where the net budget increase and associated tax rate increase is rate of inflation, using the NE CPI-U which is tied to COLA and associated with wages. There are also increases in the cost of benefits and other factors outside of the municipality's control, such as county taxes, property and casualty insurance, etc.

Revenues

Sales Tax – The Town budgeted $1,500,000 for FY27. The FY'26 actual was $1,762,206. Based on this, staff anticipate budgeting $1,700,000 for FY'28, an increase of $200,000.

Rooms, Meals, & Alcohol Taxes – The Town budgeted $1,500,000 for FY'27. The FY'26 actual was $1,840,544. Based on this staff anticipates budgeting $1,700,000 of which $546,475 will go directly to the Capital Fund to pay for existing debt service obligations and the balance will go to the General Fund.

Grand List – The Town Appraiser's preliminary estimate of Grand List growth is 1%, which would provide an estimated $543,709 in new revenue when applying the FY'27 municipal tax rate. See memo enclosed.

Local option taxes directed to the General Fund operating budget are anticipated to provide $200,000 +/- in new revenue. The Grand List growth will add $543,709. Combined these two sources will provide $743,709 in additional revenue to offset expenses.

Expenditures

COLA – The NE CPI-U is at 4.2% as of September 2026. Wages are tied to the CPI-U as of October, and status quo impact for payroll is $480,000.

Health Insurance – Blue Cross Blue Shield rate increase is 1.5% for CY 27, status quo impact for this benefit is $31,000. Dental Insurance rate increase is 2.38% for CY 27, status quo impact for this is $1,700.

Personnel – The IBEW Agreement expires on 6/30/27. IBEW represents 28 employees in Highway, Fire Rescue, Library, Water, and Wastewater.

Utilities – In FY'27 the Town budgeted the following for utility costs and is currently as follows:

	Current $/Gal	FY 27 Budget $/Gal	Difference $	Difference %	Average Gallons Consumed	Budget Impact
Gasoline - No Lead	$ 4.29	$ 2.80	$ 1.49	53%	20,857	$ 31,077
Gasoline-SNL	$ 5.28	$ 4.12	$ 1.16	28%	200	$ 232
Diesel	$ 6.05	$ 3.76	$ 2.29	61%	36,854	$ 84,395
Off Road Diesel	$ 5.49	$ 3.20	$ 2.29	72%	1,529	$ 3,502
LP Gas	$ 1.61	$ 1.61	$ -	0%	70,982	$ -
#2 Heating Oil	$ 4.61	$ 2.78	$ 1.83	66%	4,882	$ 8,934
Total					135,303	$ 128,139
	Current $/KWH	FY 27 Budget $/KWH	Difference $	Difference %	Average KWH Consumed	Budget Impact
Electricity/no Demand	0.2303	0.201	$ 0.03	15%	114,781	$ 5,778
Electricity/with Demand	0.1267	0.1106	$ 0.02	15%	1,638,408	$ 54,259
Total					1,753,189	$ 60,037

Using today's prices, the budgetary impact for fuels represents an increase of $188,176.

Staffing Requests

To date, the Manager has received the following additional full-time staffing requests, and the Department Heads will be in attendance at the meeting to answer questions the Selectboard may have.

Fire Rescue – The Town only budgeted for ½ of a position that will be filled 1/1/27, so the Town needs to budget for the other ½ of a position ($62,000 +/-). In addition, Chief Webster is requesting an additional full-time position to focus on training and to help fill shifts ($124,000 +/-). See enclosed memo from Chief Webster on the status of Fire Rescue and the need for additional staff support. It specifically speaks to the goal of having one paramedic on duty 24/7/365 and four personnel at the station 24/7/365.

Manager's Office – The time required to administer the Short-term Rental Ordinance has been greater than anticipated. In addition, the Selectboard has indicated their desire for the Town to have more of a presence online through social media, newsletters, etc. A full-time Assistant to the Town Manager/Executive Assistant that could help meet both demands is estimated to cost $108,000.

Planning & Zoning – The Planning & Zoning Department remains understaffed and is unable to meet the planning and zoning goals of the municipality and the Town's existing statutory obligations. Both the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations need to be updated, and the Town is

considering increasingly complex regulatory requirements such as inclusionary zoning, which will require technical administration and enforcement. Planning and Zoning is requesting a fourth staff position to help with meet existing demand including enforcement and allow for adequate redundancy when there is staff turnover so the department can meet its statutory review and open meeting law deadlines. The compensation range will depend on the experience of the person we are able to attract ($100,000 - $128,000 +/-). In addition, it may also be prudent to budget for consulting services to assist with special projects such as preparing zoning revisions and redistricting.

Town Plan & Other Policy Impact: N/A

Fiscal & Staff Impact: See above.

Recommendation: This time has been set aside to give the Selectboard a macro preliminary look at the FY'28 budget and receive preliminary feedback prior to the presentation of the draft budget. Unless otherwise directed, the goal is to meet existing service demands with a rate of inflation tax increase. In accordance with the Stowe Town Charter, the Town Manager will provide a draft budget for the Selectboard's consideration at your 12/17/26 meeting.

Town of Stowe
Board of Listers
PO Box 730
Stowe, VT 05672

802-253-6144

October 21, 2026

Charles,

Per your request, I have estimated the growth for the 2027 Grand List. Below is an analysis for the past five years.

2026 - 1.14%
2025 - 1.08%
2024 - 3.00% Estimated only, Reappraisal
2023 - 2.22%
2022 - 3.23%

Over the past 5 years: Average growth 2.13%

There are many residential building projects under construction currently throughout the town. The number of residential projects appears to be on par compared to previous years. Only 2 large commercial/multifamily building projects are under construction currently (Union Bank & 354 South Main). The commercial construction activity is extremely low compared to previous years. No new condominium projects have started this year, which is also low compared to the last several years.

There is no definitive way to say at this time how complete construction projects in Stowe will be on April 1 with any certainty. There also may be new applications for the Current Use program. I will continue to analyze sales and in the early spring, make recommendations to the Board of Listers if any inequitable trends warrant a need to adjust assessments in a particular neighborhood or condominium project.

Given these factors, a reasonable estimate currently for the 2027 Grand List Growth is **1%**.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Morrissey
Town Appraiser

Stowe Fire Rescue

Staffing, Readiness, and Future Needs

Report to Town Leadership

Prepared by
Edwin Webster Jr.
Chief, Stowe Fire Rescue

October 21, 2026

Executive Summary

Stowe Fire Rescue has transitioned from a volunteer-only organization to a hybrid fire-rescue department that combines full-time career personnel with part-time and paid-on-call members. The department currently employs 11 full-time professionals, including the Chief, with 13 projected by August 2027, and maintains approximately 37 part-time or on-call members.

The department's central staffing challenge is not roster size alone, but the number of trained personnel who are consistently available for scheduled coverage and surge response. The report evaluates current organization, EMS and fire qualifications, training requirements, member investment, modern fire dynamics, medical incidents, NFPA readiness, day-versus-night demand, resort-related demand, response-time improvement, training needs, risk management, recent accomplishments, and short- and long-term staffing goals.

The recommended direction is continued growth in dependable full-time staffing while preserving the hybrid model and the essential role of part-time and paid-per-call personnel. The long-term objective is a resilient 24/7/365 response system that improves turnout and response times, supports simultaneous EMS coverage, strengthens training and safety, and moves Stowe Fire Rescue closer to recognized national benchmarks.

Stowe Fire Rescue stands at a pivotal moment. As our community grows and emergency service demands evolve, we have transitioned from a volunteer-only organization to a hybrid department.

What is a Hybrid Fire-Rescue Department?

Hybrid Fire-Rescue Department: A combination staffing model that utilizes full-time career personnel together with part-time and/or paid-on-call personnel to provide continuous emergency response. Career staff provide consistent baseline coverage, while part-time and on-call members provide scheduled staffing, additional response capacity, and surge staffing for significant or simultaneous incidents. The model combines the reliability of career staffing with the flexibility and additional resources provided by part-time and on-call personnel.

Roughly 21 Part-time employees provide approximately 12,332.33 hours of shift coverage. The remaining part-time members primarily respond to incidents. Approximately 27 members live in town; however, many primarily work scheduled shifts, and **relatively few are available during periods when additional personnel are needed for surge response and to fill shifts.**

We now respond to roughly **23 incidents per week**, underscoring both the community's reliance on our services and the challenge of sustaining high-quality coverage.

1. Current Organization: Roles and Oversight

- **Chief:** Reports to the Town Manager and is responsible for overall command, policy, and strategic direction. Assists with training and operational readiness; and serves as Town Forest Fire Warden.
- **Assistant Chief – EMS:** Oversees EMS operations and training, ambulance maintenance, medical supplies, and station maintenance. Serves as the liaison to the billing service, Copley Hospital, EMS District 4, and the Vermont Department of Health. Supervises EMS-only personnel. This is a full-time position assigned to one of the department's three shifts.
- **Assistant Chief – Fire:** Oversees part-time and on-call officers and firefighters; serves as Incident Commander in the Chief's absence; reviews Development Review Board and fire-code matters; assists with training and operational readiness; and serves as Deputy Forest Fire Warden.
- **Captains (2, on call):** Serve as Incident Commanders in the absence of senior command, when available. One Captain manages the hose-maintenance program.
- **Lieutenants (6):** Three full-time shift supervisors, two part-time members, and one per-call member. All may serve as the initial Incident Commander until they are relieved and function as crew leaders.
- **Firefighter/EMS personnel:** A combination of EMS-only, fire-only, and dual-certified members. Firefighters range from exterior/engineer-qualified personnel to interior firefighters qualified to operate in Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) environments. Most officers and full-time employees manage assigned programs, including PPE, SCBA, apparatus and small-engine maintenance, and uniforms.

2. Medical Services

Many EMS members are cross-trained and are included in the overall department staffing totals above.

Certification Level	Full-Time	Part-Time
Paramedic	2	4
Advanced EMT (AEMT)	7	10
EMT	2*	9

NREMT – Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Basic Description

The **National Registry Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT/EMT)** certification represents the entry-level national standard for emergency medical technicians providing **basic life support (BLS)** care in the prehospital environment.

An EMT is trained to assess patients, recognize life-threatening conditions, provide immediate emergency care, and assist with safe transportation to an appropriate medical facility.

Typical EMT skills and responsibilities include:

- Patient assessment and obtaining vital signs
- CPR and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED)
- Airway management, oxygen administration, and basic ventilation
- Bleeding control, shock management, and wound care
- Splinting and stabilization of musculoskeletal injuries
- Emergency childbirth
- Recognition and treatment of common medical and traumatic emergencies
- Administration or assistance with certain medications within the EMT scope of practice
- Safe patient movement, lifting, and transportation
- Ambulance operations and scene safety
- Communication with dispatch, other responders, and receiving hospitals
- Documentation of patient assessment and care

NREMT certification is obtained by meeting eligibility requirements and successfully completing the National Registry certification process. Actual authority to practice as an EMT comes from the **state EMS licensing/certification agency**,

Course length is approximately 190 hours, and the course cost can be up to $1,750.

NREMT – Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) Description

The **National Registry Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT/AEMT)** certification represents an advanced level of prehospital emergency medical care beyond the EMT level. AEMTs provide **basic life support (BLS) and limited advanced life support (ALS)** care under applicable state EMS protocols and medical direction.

Typical AEMT skills and responsibilities include:

- Performing comprehensive patient assessments and obtaining vital signs
- Providing all care within the EMT scope of practice
- Advanced airway management within the authorized scope
- Establishing **intravenous (IV) and intraosseous (IO) access**
- Administering IV fluids
- Administering an expanded range of emergency medications
- Managing respiratory, cardiac, diabetic, allergic, overdose, and other medical emergencies
- Providing trauma assessment, hemorrhage control, splinting, and shock management
- CPR, AED use, and assisting with cardiac arrest management

- Monitoring patients and recognizing changes in patient condition
- Assisting with emergency childbirth and other obstetric emergencies
- Communicating with medical control and receiving hospitals
- Providing appropriate treatment and transportation decisions
- Completing accurate patient-care documentation

National Registry certification demonstrates that an AEMT has met national competency requirements. The individual's actual authority to practice and specific scope of care are established by the **state EMS authority and local medical direction**.

In **Vermont**, AEMT's permitted skills and medications are governed by Vermont EMS protocols and scope-of-practice requirements, so the Vermont scope may be more specific than the general National Registry description.

Course length is approximately 100+ hours, and the course cost can be up to $2000.

NREMT – Paramedic Description

The **National Registry Paramedic (NRP)** certification represents the highest level of National Registry prehospital EMS certification. Paramedics provide **advanced life support (ALS)** care to patients experiencing serious or life-threatening medical, traumatic, and behavioral emergencies.

Paramedics are trained to perform comprehensive patient assessments, develop treatment plans, provide advanced emergency interventions, and manage patients during transport to an appropriate medical facility.

Typical Paramedic skills and responsibilities include:

- Performing comprehensive medical and trauma patient assessments
- Providing all care within the EMT and AEMT scopes of practice
- Advanced airway management, including endotracheal intubation and other advanced airway techniques
- Establishing **IV and IO access** and administering fluids
- Administering a broad range of emergency medications
- Performing and interpreting **12-lead ECGs**
- Recognizing and treating cardiac dysrhythmia
- Performing electrical therapies, including defibrillation, synchronized cardioversion, and transcutaneous pacing
- Managing cardiac arrest and other critical cardiovascular emergencies
- Treating respiratory emergencies, including advanced ventilation and airway management
- Managing serious trauma, shock, hemorrhage, neurological emergencies, overdoses, and other critical conditions
- Managing obstetric emergencies and emergency childbirth
- Providing advanced pain management and other pharmacological interventions
- Communicating with medical control, hospitals, and other healthcare providers
- Making treatment, transportation, and destination decisions based on the patient's condition
- Providing continuous reassessment and advanced care during transport
- Completing thorough patient-care documentation

National Registry Paramedic certification demonstrates that an individual has met national competency requirements for the Paramedic level. Actual authority to practice and the specific procedures and medications a Paramedic may perform are determined by the **state EMS authority, state protocols, and medical direction**.

Course length is approximately 14-18 months, and the course cost can be up to $20,000.

Seven active members serve exclusively on the EMS side of the department.

*The two full-time EMTs are awaiting enrollment in AEMT training and are progressing toward the department's certification requirement.

Continual Education:

All certification levels require annual continuing education and affiliation with a licensed EMS agency with recertification cycle every two years, within these two years for example an AEMT is required to do 52 hours of continue ed. This education is completed through in-house and outside training.

The **State of Vermont licenses Stowe Fire Rescue at the Paramedic level**. Our goal is to staff a **Paramedic 24/7/365**, although recruitment challenges currently limit us to achieving this approximately **50% of the time**.

Stowe Fire Rescue maintains at least one **Advanced EMT (AEMT)** on duty **100% of the time**, a standard sustained through the dedication of our staff. Two current full-time EMTs are awaiting AEMT training. All full-time employees must obtain **AEMT certification or higher within two years of hire**.

3. Fire Suppression

Many fire-service members are cross-trained and are included in the overall department staffing totals above.

Fire Qualification	Active Members
Fire Officer II	1
Firefighter II	2
Firefighter I	15
IDLH-trained but not state-certified	7

Vermont Firefighter I

Vermont Firefighter I is entry-level structural firefighting training designed to provide firefighters with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to function safely as members of a fire company. Training includes firefighter safety, PPE and SCBA, fire behavior, building construction, ladders, hose and fire streams, water supply, forcible entry, search and rescue, ventilation, structural fire attack, salvage and overhaul, firefighter survival, hazardous-materials operations, and practical/live-fire evolutions.

Successful completion of the required coursework, practical skills, and certification testing prepares a student for Vermont Firefighter I certification. The program is approximately **184 hours** and typically takes about six months to complete, with two evening classes per week and some Saturday sessions. State funding covers the course cost. **Firefighter I certification is required for all full-time employees.**

Vermont Firefighter II

Vermont Firefighter II is advanced structural firefighting training that builds upon Firefighter I certification. It develops the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to function as an experienced member of a fire company. Training includes advanced fireground operations, structural fire attack, search and rescue, ventilation, forcible entry, fire streams, water supply, building construction, fire-protection systems, communications, incident command, fire-cause and evidence preservation, pre-incident planning, equipment maintenance, public fire education, and firefighter safety.

The program includes classroom instruction and practical skills that prepare the student for Vermont Firefighter II certification. It averages **90 additional hours beyond Firefighter I** and is the next step in firefighter certification and professional development. **Firefighter I certification is required for all full-time employees**

Vermont Fire Academy – Fire Officer II

The **Vermont Fire Academy Fire Officer II** program is an advanced officer-development and certification course designed for fire service personnel functioning at a **supervisory/managerial level**. Vermont has historically offered Fire Officer I/II certification through the Vermont Fire Academy, with Fire Officer II corresponding to the managerial level of the professional fire-officer standards.

The course builds on Fire Officer I and develops the knowledge and skills necessary to manage personnel, departmental programs, resources, and more complex emergency operations. Major areas generally include:

- **Leadership and human-resource management**, including employee performance evaluation and addressing performance issues
- **Department administration**, including budgeting, purchasing, records, reports, policies, and procedures

- **Community and governmental relations**
- **Fire prevention, inspections, and preliminary fire investigation responsibilities**
- **Health and safety**, including reviewing injuries, accidents, exposures, and unsafe practices
- **Emergency operations and incident command**, with emphasis on supervising **multi-unit incidents**
- Resource deployment and coordination
- Development and implementation of departmental programs
- **Post-incident analysis** and evaluation of emergency operations
- Written and practical assignments demonstrating officer-level management and decision-making

Fire Officer II moves beyond the first-line company-officer responsibilities emphasized at Fire Officer I and develops the individual for broader **management, administrative, and operational leadership responsibilities**. Vermont's certification system requires continuing training to be based on the applicable professional-qualification standard and the certification level held.

*In addition to Firefighter I and II certification, members must train in numerous specialized areas, including vehicle rescue, emergency vehicle and apparatus operations, rural water supply, and electrical emergencies. The modern fire service has evolved into an all-hazards response organization. When members of the public face an emergency and do not know who to call, they call the fire department. Therefore, firefighters must maintain the broad knowledge, practical skills, and readiness necessary to respond safely and effectively to many different types of incidents.

Members must also complete at least **24 hours of continuing education annually**, either through in-house or outside training.

Member Training, Participation, and Community Investment

The department conducts 24 evening fire-training sessions and 12 EMS-training sessions annually. Members are required to attend at least 50% of the training sessions applicable to their assigned role.

Beginning in January 2026, the department also established minimum incident-response requirements. Fire members must respond to at least 5% of annual fire incidents, which averages approximately 25 calls per year. EMS members are expected to respond to approximately 45 medical incidents annually.

Regular participation in both training and emergency response is necessary for members to demonstrate competencies, maintain their skills, and remain familiar with department equipment, procedures, and personnel. Consistent participation also helps ensure that members are prepared to operate safely and effectively during emergency incidents.

There is a significant financial investment associated with recruiting, training, certifying, and equipping each member. The Town strongly supports Stowe Fire Rescue and its personnel. In return for that investment, the department must maintain reasonable standards for training attendance, incident participation, competency, and operational readiness.

4. Cost to outfit and equip a member

Uniforms

Each member requires uniform shirts, pants, a belt, boots, a fall coat, and a winter/rain jacket. The estimated initial cost is **$1,200 per member**, plus annual replacement costs as needed.

Structural Firefighting Gear

Structural firefighting gear is recommended for replacement at least every 10 years. Two sets are recommended for each interior firefighter because gear must be laundered after carcinogen exposure to reduce occupational cancer risk.

Item	Unit Cost	Recommended Quantity	Extended Cost
Helmet	$500.00	1	$500.00
Boots	$605.00	1	$605.00

Item	Unit Cost	Recommended Quantity	Extended Cost
Coat	$2,628.60	2	$5,257.20
Pants	$2,303.29	2	$4,606.58
Gloves	$200.00	2	$400.00
Hood	$150.00	2	$300.00
SCBA mask	$400.00	1	$400.00
Total			$12,068.78

Interior firefighters also require:

- **Portable radio:** Approximately $6,000–$10,000 per member; recommended replacement cycle of seven years.
- **SCBA:** Approximately $8,000 per member; recommended replacement cycle of 10 years. The department currently has 22 SCBA units in service.

The average total investment is approximately **$30,000 per interior firefighter**.

5. Today's Fire Dynamics and Response

- **Twenty years ago:** Families generally had **10–15 minutes** to escape a residential fire.
- **Today:** The escape window may be **less than four minutes** because of synthetic materials and modern construction.
- Without sprinklers, a fire may become unsurvivable before detection. When dispatch time (approximately two minutes), member turnout (approximately ten minutes, when station not staffed), and travel time (up to 20 minutes) are combined, total arrival time may exceed **30+ minutes**, creating a serious life-safety risk.

6. Time Matters in Medical and Trauma Response

A staffed ambulance allows Stowe Fire Rescue to begin care sooner when every minute matters. In 2024, heart disease was Vermont's leading cause of death, and unintentional injuries were third. Those figures describe different emergencies, but both show why Stowe needs a dependable medical response.

In **cardiac arrest**, the heart stops pumping blood to the brain. People nearby should call 911, start CPR immediately, and use an AED as soon as one is available. A staffed ambulance brings trained personnel to take over resuscitation and provide further care as quickly as possible. Immediate CPR can double or triple a person's chance of survival. Vermont's Recommends EMS agency when dealing with a cardiac arrest use the High-Performance CPR model. To effectively perform this a minimum of 6 EMS trained personnel are required on scene. With four members on duty and assistance from Stowe Police we would be able to meet this.

A **STEMI** is a serious heart attack, usually caused by a complete blockage of an artery supplying the heart muscle. Crews can obtain an ECG, recognize signs of a STEMI, begin treatment, and alert the receiving hospital while transporting the patient. Some patients need a hospital capable of opening the blocked artery; the University of Vermont Medical Center provides that type of care. The sooner the blockage is treated, the less heart muscle may be damaged.

Stowe's outdoor recreation also brings the potential for serious injuries. After a fall, crash, or other traumatic event, crews need to reach the patient, assess the injury, control severe bleeding, and arrange

transport to appropriate care. **A staffed ambulance shortens the time from the 911 call to the start of care** and provides a crew ready to continue that care throughout the trip.

7. NFPA Readiness

What NFPA Standards Are;

The **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)** develops nationally recognized fire, emergency services, electrical, and life-safety codes and standards. These documents are created through an open, consensus-based process involving fire-service professionals, technical experts, public officials, manufacturers, labor representatives, and other stakeholders. They are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current research, technology, operational experience, and lessons learned from firefighter injuries, fatalities, and major incidents.

NFPA standards establish nationally recognized benchmarks for matters such as staffing, response performance, training, protective equipment, apparatus, communications, incident management, and firefighter health and safety. They are generally **voluntary consensus standards**, not automatically laws. They become legally enforceable when adopted or incorporated by a federal, state, or local authority. **Even when they have not been formally adopted, they remain widely recognized professional benchmarks for evaluating whether a fire department provides a reasonable and defensible level of service**.

Why Stowe Should Follow Them to the Best of Our Ability

Stowe Fire Rescue may not be able to meet every NFPA objective immediately because of geography, funding, staffing availability, travel distances, and the realities of operating a combination department. However, we should work toward these standards to the greatest practical extent because they:

- **Protect the public:** Adequate staffing and timely deployment improve the likelihood of rescuing occupants, controlling fires, and delivering effective emergency medical care.
- **Protect firefighters and EMS personnel:** Sufficient staffing, training, equipment, and command structure reduce unnecessary risk and help personnel operate safely during complex incidents.
- **Provide measurable goals:** NFPA benchmarks allow the Town and department to compare actual performance with recognized targets and identify specific service gaps.
- **Support responsible planning:** Documented gaps help guide staffing, apparatus, equipment, training, station-location, and mutual-aid decisions.
- **Strengthen accountability:** Using recognized standards demonstrates that the Town understands the risks facing the community and is making informed, good-faith efforts to address them.
- **Provide a defensible professional benchmark:** Even when full compliance is not immediately possible, documenting current performance, operational limitations, and a reasonable improvement plan shows due diligence and supports transparent decision-making.

The goal is not to claim immediate compliance with every provision. The goal is to use nationally recognized standards as a **road map for continuous improvement**, establish priorities based on Stowe's community risks, and clearly document where additional resources are needed.

NFPA 1710 has historically addressed career-department deployment, while NFPA 1720 has addressed volunteer and combination-department deployment. The table below uses both as planning benchmarks because Stowe Fire Rescue operates a hybrid staffing model.

One standard that is a priority for me is response times. Time matters and we can only control part of it. As Selectboard Member **Neil Van Dyke** noted during the August 2023 A.P. Triton presentation:

“The only thing we can fix is turnout times.”

Standard	Description	Current Performance
NFPA 1710 (Career)	Dispatch under 120 seconds; turnout under 60 seconds for EMS and under 80 seconds for fire; first engine on scene within four minutes, 90% of the time.	This information is difficult. We can not measure how long from when 911 call in answered to dispatch and enroute. All we can control is out the door times, which are improving
NFPA 1720 (Combination)	Dispatch under 120 seconds; in a rural area, six members arrive within 14 minutes, 80% of the time.	SFR falls more under 1720 vs 1710 Not meeting standard; average on-scene time for a suppression unit is 17.21 minutes, with variety of staff,

8. Day-versus-Night Incident Demand

Stowe Fire Rescue's incident distribution closely follows the national pattern for fire and EMS demand. National studies show emergency service demand increasing through the morning, remaining elevated during the daytime, and generally peaking in the afternoon or early evening. USFA reports that overall fire-department runs are lowest in the early morning and peak in the late afternoon.

Incident Comparison: 0600–1800 versus 1800–0600

Incident numbers are from January 1, 2026 to August 1st 2026 8 Months.

Incident Type	Day: 0600–1800	Night: 1800–0600
Fire	54 — 56.3%	42 — 43.8%
Medical	125 — 66.8%	62 — 33.2%
Combined	179 — 63.3%	104 — 36.7%
National planning range*	~60–65%	~35–40%

*The national range is a planning comparison derived from national time-of-day patterns; it is not an NFPA or USFA staffing standard.

What the Data Shows

Stowe's **63% daytime / 37% nighttime** distribution is consistent with the national pattern. EMS drives much of the daytime workload. A national NEMSIS study examining more than **311 million EMS records from 2010–2022** found a strong and predictable hourly pattern across 33 categories of medical emergencies.

Fire demand is more evenly distributed between the two 12-hour periods. National USFA analysis similarly found that fire incidents increase throughout the day, peak around the dinner hours, and then decline overnight.

The Important Staffing Point

Lower nighttime call volume does not mean nighttime staffing is unnecessary.

Stowe still experienced **36.7% of its total incidents at night**, and **43.8% of its fire incidents occurred between 1800 and 0600**. Put another way, nearly four out of every 10 Stowe incidents occur at night, and almost 44% of fire incidents occur at night.

This is significant when considering minimum staffing because fire incidents require an immediate concentration of personnel, regardless of when they occur.

Connection to the A.P. Triton Study

The Town commissioned A.P. Triton to evaluate Fire/EMS organization, staffing requirements, and costs. Town documents state that increasing service demands, difficulty covering shifts, and declining volunteer availability contributed to the need for the study.

“Strategically staffed with a dedicated three-person team operating around the clock” (triton report pg. vi)

In an idea situation we would have 5 cross-trained members around the clock, three for the engine and two for the ambulance, a future goal. Understanding the financial restraints and continuing to support the hybrid department, staying close to NFPA standards, and supporting incidents at this time I recommend four members staffed at station around the clock. Part-time employees help cover these positions and respond from home when needed. A three-person crew does not give proper support on an incident scene or overlapping incidents.

Staffing

Stowe's call volume does not stop at 6:00 pm (18:00). Although approximately 63% of incidents occur during the 12-hour daytime period, approximately **37% occur overnight**. More importantly, approximately **44% of fire incidents occur overnight**. Staffing solely around daytime call volume does not adequately address the community's 24-hour emergency response risk.

Of the 37 part-time members:

- 13 respond only to fire-related incidents when available. Since January 1, 2026, these members have collectively responded to less than **1%** of the department’s fire-related incidents.
- Roughly 21 Part-time employees provide approximately 12,332.33 hours of shift coverage.

These figures demonstrate that roster size alone does not accurately represent the number of personnel consistently available for emergency response or surge staffing.

Since January 1, 2026, the average personal response per incident is **4.17 members**. Note Per NFPA 1710; 15-16 members are required to effectively extinguish a single-family home building fire.

Bottom line: Stowe's data supports a staffing model that recognizes the higher daytime workload while maintaining dependable minimum staffing 24 hours a day. The issue is not whether nighttime is as busy as daytime—it is not. The issue is whether sufficient personnel are immediately available for the substantial portion of emergencies, particularly fires, that occur overnight or the need to respond with more than one ambulance without calling people in and/or relying on Mutual Aid.

9. Resort-Related Demand

- Stowe is a resort community experiencing continual growth.
- An estimated **200 incidents last year were directly related to Stowe Mountain Resort**.
- As of 09/14/2026 total incidents above Harlow hill are at **162**
- These incidents represented approximately **15% of total call volume**.
- Increase of population of visitors, when town is busy, SFR sees an increase to call volume.
- Short term rental and fire alarm responses

10. Comparable Department Staffing Models

The following departments provide useful staffing comparisons based on population served, geographic area, annual call volume, and shift staffing models.

Department	Population Served	Square Miles	Annual Call Volume	Staffing / Schedule
Franklin, NH	8,741	29.2	2,300	4 per shift; 24/72
Hartford, VT	10,686	45.9	2,730	6 per shift; 24/72; two stations
Barre City, VT	8,387	3.98	2,600	4 per shift; 24/72
Vail, CO	5,300–30,000	4.69	2,000	6 per shift; 48/96; three stations
Bar Harbor, ME	5,000–20,000	63.11	1,692	4 per shift; 24/72
Stowe, VT	5,500–20,000	72.7	1,282	Hybrid; variable staffing

11. Response-Time Improvement

Improved staffing:

- Reduces scene-arrival delays.
- Enhance patient and firefighter safety.
- Provides the most practical way to address modern fire dynamics, where survivability windows have decreased from approximately 10 minutes to less than four minutes.

12. Training and Development

- Continue structured **Engineer and Officer development programs** to ensure redundancy and operational depth.
- Expand **cross-training between Fire and EMS** to maximize flexibility and staffing resilience.
- Consider a future **full-time Training Chief** position estimated at an annual cost $160,000 with additional $20,000 for outfitting.
- Build a training facility
- AP Triton's recommendations 9 is to create a training officer Position, this has been done, however currently held by members who also work cover normal shifts making assignment difficult. AP Triton recommends

"Allocate resources to create a Training Officer position focused on training management. The officer should possess substantial training experience and relieve the current need for personnel to assume dual roles within the organization."

13. Community and Risk Management

- Educate residents about how staffing and response-time improvements may affect the community's ISO rating and insurance costs.
- Promote residential sprinkler systems, which dramatically improve survivability.

Risks and Operational Impacts

- **Affordable housing uncertainty:** Affects recruitment and retention.
- **Shift-coverage challenges:** Declining volunteerism and high living costs reduce the number of available on-call members.
- **Hospital transport:** Out-of-town transports, especially to UVMMC, may leave only two personnel in town, when staffed at four.
- **Training demands:** The department maintains high training expectations despite the limited time available from on-call members.

Effectiveness of Residential Sprinklers

- **Fire deaths and injuries:** From 2015–2019, civilian fire-death rates were **89% lower** and injury rates were **27% lower** in homes with sprinklers.
- **Fire control:** In **77%** of fires where sprinklers operated, only one sprinkler head activated. That single head controlled the fire in **96%** of those cases, according to NFPA.
- A single sprinkler's head often extinguishes or controls a fire before the fire department arrives—**it's like having a firefighter in your home**.

14. Chief's Update: Areas of Improvement and Project Status During My First Year

- Continued integrating the Fire and EMS departments by promoting teamwork, establishing clear expectations, and providing unified leadership and decision-making.
- Introduced department directives, which serve as general orders.
- **Implemented minimum training and incident response requirements.**
- Trained tenured full-time personnel to the Engineer level.
- Reobtained my Advanced EMT certification.
- Reinstated monthly EMS training.
- Onboarded five new part-time Fire/EMS members. Three additional EMS-only part-time members are currently beginning the onboarding process.
- Hired one new full-time employee, with two additional full-time positions planned.
- Replaced the department's squad, tanker, and ambulance (team effort)
- Transitioned the burn-permit process to an online platform.
- Implemented a new records management system that consolidates multiple areas of department operations into a single program.
- Established a performance-evaluation process for part-time and on-call members.
- Continued reviewing and updating the department's Standard Operating Guidelines.

Recommendation to Town Leadership

Investing in full-time staffing growth, supported by a sustainable hybrid model, is the most effective way to:

- Strengthen Fire and EMS response capability.
- Align Stowe Fire Rescue more closely with national standards.
- Maintain dependable minimum staffing around the clock.
- Preserve part-time and paid-per-call capacity for surge events.
- The Town should also explore a residential sprinkler ordinance.
- Second Station on Mountain Road.
- Does the Town want to adopt the 24 recommendations submitted by the AP Triton Study.
- See appendix A for recommendations and updated status.

15. Future Short- and Long-Term Goals

- **By July 2027, establish four shifts with four members assigned to each shift.** Three positions on each shift will be filled by full-time employees, and the fourth position will be regularly covered by a part-time employee. This model will provide four cross-trained personnel on duty 24/7/365 while preserving the flexibility of Stowe's hybrid staffing system.

- **Add a Full-Time Training/Safety Chief; Cost $180,000** Currently, one member oversees EMS training, and another oversees fire training. Both members also work regular operational shifts, making it difficult to consistently plan, organize, document, and deliver weekly and monthly training. All full-time employees conduct weekly shift training, and department members meet for three nights each month for combined training. A full-time Training/Safety Chief would provide consistent oversight and coordination of the department's training programs while supporting the following responsibilities:

- Develop, schedule, and coordinate fire, EMS, officer, and specialty training.
- Ensure all members remain compliant with certification, continuing-education, and annual training requirements.
- Maintain accurate training and certification records.
- Assist with administrative responsibilities and the continued development and updating of department policies and Standard Operating Guidelines.
- Respond to emergency incidents when operational support is needed.
- Serve as the designated Safety Officer at major incidents, including hazardous material incidents where this position is required.
- Promote consistent safety practices, risk management, and injury prevention throughout the department.

Adding this position sooner than later would improve training consistency, regulatory compliance, operational readiness, and incident-scene safety while reducing the administrative burden currently placed on members who must manage training responsibilities in addition to their regular shift assignments.

- **Continue using part-time employees as an essential operational resource.** In addition to regularly filling the fourth position on each shift, part-time employees will cover approved full-time employee leave and provide added staffing when overlapping or significant incidents create a surge in demand.
- **Reduce response and turnout times** to improve survivability.
- **Move closer to compliance with NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720.**
- **Ensure simultaneous EMS coverage. (as of 09/14/2026 179 incidents have overlapped our of 853, 21%)**
- **Establish PTE minimum monthly shift requirements**
- **Continue leveraging paid-per-call members** for additional incident-response and surge capacity.
- **Establish automatic-aid agreements** with neighboring agencies; discussions are underway.
- **Long Term goal- Add 4th FTE to each shift to cover employee leave (ETO) Would need 4 more FTE's**
- **Long Term goal-** Build a training facility**.**
- **Long Term Goal:** Work with state on life safety fire inspections for Target hazards and Short-Term Rental.
- **Long Term Goal**: Work with the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition on exploring a residential sprinkler ordinance for new construction.
- **Long term goal - Discuss a future second staffed station near Stowe Mountain Resort**, with this goal staffing will need to be increased to 6 to 8 members a shift, 3-4 at each station.
    - This concept was recently recommended to Stowe Mountain Resort by the Vermont State Fire Marshal. Due to the distance and travel time involved, responding to an incident above Harlow Hill is comparable to responding from Morrisville to Stowe Village. This distance can significantly affect response times and reinforces the need for appropriate on-site fire protection, trained personnel, and emergency-response resources at the resort. This Station would not just cover above Harlow Hill, but another resource for quick response in many areas off Mountain Road. Both Stations would work together to ensure proper response.

Respectfully submitted,

Edwin Webster Jr.
Chief, Stowe Fire Rescue