



North East Joint Fire District Evaluation of Operations Review of Current Operations and Recommendations for Change

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Prepared for:

North East Joint Fire District

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Summary

In January 2015, the Board of Commissioners of the North East Joint Fire District (NEJFD) engaged the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to provide the Board with a concise report on the existing operations of the Webster Fire Department (WFD) and the Union Hill Fire Company (UHFD) and to identify a series of options related to fire protection services in the district. To accomplish the task, CGR conducted a series of interviews with officials in the NEJFD, Webster Fire Department, Union Hill Fire Department, the Town of Penfield, the Town of Webster, Town of Ontario and the Monroe County Emergency Communications Department. Information was also requested for those agencies and other relevant organizations.

Demographic Trend for District

The population of the area served by NEJFD has grown approximately 52 percent since 1990 from 18,474 to 28,128. This has been matched with a parallel growth in the number of housing units in the district. The Penfield portion is growing at a faster rate than the Webster portion.

The population of the portion of the NEJFD served by UHFD is estimated to be about 4,200 based on the number of parcels in the area and estimated 2.8 residents per parcel in the whole fire district. UHFD also serves an estimated 1,500 people in the western portion of Ontario.

Baseline Information

The report provides information about the existing situation for the NEJFD, WFD and UHFD. The table below provides a brief summary of the key information gathered for the report.

Summary Comparison		
Area	Department	
	NEJFD/WFD	UHFD
Administrative Staff	5 elected commissioners, full time executive director, part time treasurer, and part time secretary	5 elected board members from the organization There is a part time treasurer.
Stations	2 (3rd completion in Dec. 2015)	2
Engines	4	3
Ladders	1	0

Summary Comparison		
Area	Department	
	NEJFD/WFD	UHFD
Rescue Trucks	1	1
Interior Vol. Firefighters	48	23
Paid Fire Fighters	None	Up to 4 per shift from 6 am to 6 pm. Also respond to ambulance calls
Annual Fire Service Expenses (2014)	\$1,743,989	\$447,363
Fire Calls (2014)	937	245 (Webster and Ontario)
ISO Rating	4	5
50 Percent Response Time	7.3 minutes	7.6 minutes
90 Percent Response Time	13.4 minutes	12.7 minutes

Observations on Existing Conditions

Broken into two broad categories, the following observations about existing conditions provide context for changes to the existing operations.

Administrative

- When compared to other fire districts in the eastern and northeastern portion of Monroe County, the NEJFD has a relatively low tax rate.
- At the end of 2013, NEJFD had the highest amount of outstanding debt of any fire district in Monroe County and was the fourth highest in New York State with \$7.1 million.
- NEJFD's tax rate and inflation adjusted tax levy have risen steadily since 2009. The tax rate in Webster has risen from \$0.99 per \$1000 to \$1.15 per \$1000 taxable assessed value (TAV) while the tax levy has increased 9 percent faster than the rate of inflation over that time period.
- NEJFD has substantial debt related to its building projects. However, the Board has a financial plan to continue improvements and retire the debt without further raising tax rates. By following their plan and maintaining current operational expenses, the district will be able to replace its equipment on a regular schedule, pay off outstanding debt and maintain a total tax levy of about \$2.3 million (unadjusted for inflation) for the next thirty years. If the recent growth in TAV continues, the result would be a decreasing tax rate.
- NEJFD has strong administrative support from the Executive Director, Secretary and Treasurer as well as an active and involved Board.

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- The value of the NEJFD contract with UHFD in 2015 is about 10 percent of the tax levy and the estimated TAV of the area covered by UHFD is also about 10 percent of total TAV of the district.
 - UHFD recently separated the ambulance and fire operations, which necessitated substantial operational and administrative change. The transition impacts the fiscal operations of the organization and has inhibited long range planning. This transition is placing a large burden on the volunteer administration of UHFD.
 - UHFD's financial statements present an incomplete picture of the health of the organization as the separation of the fire and ambulance operations is still an evolving process that requires substantial adjustments to cost accounting and organizational operations. Further, this report focused on the fire operations of UHFD, not the whole organization.
 - NEJFD has provided the WFD with excellent equipment and facilities with which to pursue its mission.
 - UHFD has the essential equipment and supplies to operate, but because of fiscal conditions the inventory is not as large or diverse as WFD.

Operational

- WFD has sufficient volunteer manpower to provide an adequate response to calls in the whole NEJFD.
- WFD responds to calls with more firefighters on average than UHFD.
- Both departments use automatic aid to ensure sufficient resources are available.
- Response times for both WFD and UHFD are comparable.
- Both WFD and UHFD response times are lengthened when responders need to get to the station before responding or maybe sleeping at the time of the call.
- Once NEJFD Station # 3 is in service, the location of the NEJFD stations are appropriate to provide five minute or less driving response to 90 % of calls in the district, including the area currently handled by UHFD.
- NEJFD and WFD should look at improving resource availability from Station # 2, particularly if building in Penfield continues to increase the number of calls in that area.
- UHFD relies on paid employees to ensure responses to their fire and EMS runs.
- In direct comparison, the two departments have similar cost per call, cost per resident, and calls per 1000 residents. UHFD has more volunteers per 1000 residents than WFD.

Options for Improvement

The NEJFD has a variety of options that are available for improving service to its residents. As illustrated in the report, the NEJFD is providing quality service at a relatively low cost to its residents. The options fall into two major categories: options that deal with the relationship with UHFD (the first three) and options that identify other areas for improvement. Each option will require specific evaluation by the Board of Commissioners for cost effectiveness, functional efficacy and long term sustainability. The suggested options for improvement are presented in bullet form and are explained in greater detail in the report.

Status Quo

Stop Contracting with UHFD

Enhance Operational and Administrative Support of UHFD

Consider Efficiency and Collaboration Opportunities

Enhance Support of Volunteers

- Look to Increase Volunteer Base
- Creation of a Length of Service Awards Program
- Identify Local Programs
- Reduce Nuisance Alarms
- Focus on Leadership Development Opportunities
- Continue Support of the Explorer Program
- Consider Establishing a Bunk In or Study Hall

Seek to Improve Turnout Time and Response Time

Recommendations for Action

Based on criteria established by the NEJFD Board, the following actions are recommended for consideration.

- **Transition to a One District, One Department Model-** This recommendation is based on the potential to substantially reduce costs for the fire district with little to no impact on service to its residents. This is not an easy action to recommend as it will have a significant negative impact to another organization with which there is a long relationship. If the Board chooses this action, below are some of the items that they should consider:
 - Establish a transition committee that has representation from all involved parties,

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- Establish a course of action that will encourage the UHFD firefighters that live in or near the district to join WFD,
 - Work with UHFD to manage the financial and organization transition that will come with the loss of the contract,
 - Evaluate if using either or both UHFD fire stations under contract to respond to calls district wide might benefit residents, and
 - Communicate clearly with residents and elected officials the course of action and supporting rationale. It will be particularly important to work with the Town of Ontario to ensure appropriate fire protection to all areas of its town.

Although with diligent action by NEJFD, WFD, and UHFD it may be possible to enact this recommendation on or before the end of 2016, it might be necessary to extend the timeline to appropriately address all details related to this transition.

- **Enhance the Support of Volunteers-** This recommendation includes seven separate actions (described in the report) that should be considered by a committee(s) of the NEJFD and WFD. The District is clearly committed to a volunteer workforce and has provided top notch fire stations and equipment for the members to use. The NEJFD and WFD should work together to evaluate which of the separate actions (or other actions) will have the most substantial positive impact on the operation.
- **Seek to Improve Turnout Time and Response Time** – This recommendation is particularly important for events that need a prompt response such as reported fires and serious accidents. NEJFD and WFD should establish a list of high priority events (based on dispatch information and actual condition found) and goals for response to those events based on NFPA 1720. The WFD performance should be measured and analyzed to improve future responses. Potential areas identified in the report are a low number of qualified drivers and traffic flow problems at certain times of day.
- **Establish Key Performance Indicators** – This recommendation is tied to the preceding suggestion, but focuses on identifying if the existing volunteer response is no longer sufficient to meet the community needs and expectations or the established standards. NEJFD and WFD have clearly stated that they would like to remain exclusively volunteer responders, but the national trend for communities of this size is that paid staff is sometimes needed to meet response needs. The NEJFD

should evaluate objective data on a regular basis to gauge if supplementing volunteers with a paid workforce might be needed.

- **Consider Efficiency and Collaboration Opportunities** - The NEJFD should actively seek out further opportunities to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Options include expanding use of group purchasing, sharing services with other municipalities and districts, and enhancing interagency planning and communication. There is the potential for property tax rebates from NYS for qualified efficiency plans with other governments.

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Introduction

Project Background

In 2005, the North East Joint Fire District (NEJFD) engaged the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to conduct a study entitled “North East Joint Fire District Planning Study- 2006 to 2026: Staffing, Equipment and Facilities Needs for the Next Twenty Years.” That study informed several key changes at NEJFD over the last decade including:

- Construction of the Enderlin Station to replace the old Village Fire Station
- Planning for Station Three in the northern portion of district
- Development of capital replacement plan to ensure adequate response apparatus
- Hiring a full time administrator
- Renovation of Station Two
- Provide facilities and equipment that encourage volunteer participation

In January 2015, the Board of Commissioners of NEJFD engaged CGR to provide the Board with a concise report on the existing operations of the Webster Fire Department (WFD) and the Union Hill Fire Company (UHFD) and to identify a series of options related to fire protection services in the district. To accomplish the task, CGR conducted a series of interviews with officials in the NEJFD, Webster Fire Department, Union Hill Fire Department, the Town of Penfield, the Town of Webster, Town of Ontario and the Monroe County Emergency Communications Department. Information was also requested for those agencies and other relevant organizations.

Report Structure

Although the report references the initial work performed by CGR, it is a wholly independent project. The report is structured with two sections. The first is a “Baseline Section” describing the existing environment for NEJFD, the Webster Fire Department and the Union Hill Fire Department including areas of concern for the existing operations. The second is an “Options Section” that provides a series of options for the district to consider in relation to areas of concern that are identified in the first section of the report. The identified options are considered to be the most likely courses the district could pursue, but the district should not feel limited by those that are presented.

Baseline Section

This section is divided into the three entities (NEJFD, Webster Fire and Union Hill Fire) as well as a portion related to the demographics and geography of the area. A separate portion of the baseline is dedicated to the demand for fire service in NEJFD and also the portions of the Town of Ontario covered by UHFD.

Demographics and Geography

The borders of the NEJFD do not match municipal borders for either of the towns that it serves. As a consequence, the demographic profile is an approximation based on Census figures for the involved municipalities. Estimations are consistent with the previous CGR study. The NEJFD includes the entire Village of Webster, portions of the Town of Webster outside the Village and portions of the Town of Penfield.

Demographic Trend for District

The population of the area served by NEJFD has grown approximately 52 percent since 1990 from 18,474 to 28,128, comparable to growth in the number of housing units in the district. The Penfield portion is growing at a faster rate than the Webster portion.

North East Joint Fire District Population Estimates			
	1990	2000	2010
Webster NEJFD	16,024	19,065	23,741
Penfield NEJFD	2,450	3,158	4,388
Total NEJFD	18,474	22,223	28,128
Increase from prior census		20%	27%
Source: Based on US Census with area estimates by CGR			

The population of the portion of the NEJFD served by UHFD is estimated to be about 4,200 based on the number of parcels in the area and an estimated 2.8 residents per parcel in the whole fire district. UHFD also serves an estimated 1,500 people in the western portion of the Town of Ontario in Wayne County.

The population trend for the NEJFD can be inferred from the regional growth projections. The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) projects that the growth for Webster, Penfield and neighboring Ontario should all level off in the next decade.

Population Trends for Towns of Ontario, Penfield and Webster					
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Webster - All	26,175	32,710	37,242	39,031	37,680
Penfield - All	30,219	34,646	36,242	37,051	38,052
Ontario - All	8,560	9,778	10,136	10,386	10,599

Source: 1990 to 2010 US Census, 2020 to 2030 estimates from G/FRPC

Planned Development

There are several planned and potential developments in the NEJFD that could increase service demand in the near future. In Webster, two senior living projects are being built along Hard Road, each with 220 units, and an existing apartment facility is adding 100 units, also on Hard Road. Additionally, another 100 unit apartment complex is being planned, again on Hard Road. The majority of the developments on Hard Road will be in NEJFD with additional traffic and other call demands.

In Penfield, the area along NY-250 to the north of Atlantic Avenue is being rezoned to mixed use, which will open it to denser commercial and residential development than currently exists there. There is also interest in building a housing development near the intersection of Jackson and Plank Roads, but nothing firmly planned at this time.

There is no additional planned commercial growth in the district. However, the Xerox property remains a wild card with potential of redevelopment of sites on the complex.

If the planned development occurs, NEJFD will see additional growth in the Penfield section of their district and also along the district border with West Webster. This could result in further growth of population, taxable assessed value and call volume.

Taxable Assessed Value

Since the NEJFD was formed, there has been a steady increase in the taxable assessed value (TAV) of the fire district. Since 2009, the Webster portion has added about 9 percent while the Penfield portion has increased by about 25 percent. The net result is an 11 percent increase over the last seven years. Net of inflation, however, the growth in TAV has been negligible.

Taxable Assessed Value of NEJFD (Full Value, in Millions)								Change since 2009
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Full Value-Penfield	\$ 266	\$ 288	\$ 297	\$ 310	\$ 323	\$ 332	\$ 392	47%
Full Value-Webster	\$ 1,706	\$ 1,803	\$ 1,816	\$ 1,836	\$ 1,818	\$ 1,851	\$ 1,869	9%
Full Value - NEJFD	\$ 1,972	\$ 2,091	\$ 2,113	\$ 2,146	\$ 2,140	\$ 2,183	\$ 2,261	11%

Source: NEJFD Budgets & Monroe County Data

There are 8308 tax parcels in the Webster portion of the NEJFD. The tax roll does not separate the areas served by WFD and UHFD. CGR conducted a manual review of tax maps identified 8 maps that are fully served by UHFD and 4 maps that are partially served. Rather than a lengthy effort to determine the exact value of the area served by UHFD in the NEJFD, CGR estimated a range based on value of the whole maps served by UHFD and also a portion of the partial maps.

TAV of Property in UHFD Service Area	
	Millions
8 maps fully in UHFD area	\$170
4 Partial Maps (2/3 value)	\$75
4 Partial Maps (1/3 value)	\$37
UHFD in NEJFD low estimate-with 1/3	\$207
UHFD in NEJFD high estimate with 2/3	\$245
<i>Source: CGR, County Tax Maps, Town Tax Roll</i>	

The low end estimate is \$207 million and the high end estimate is \$245 million. These represent 11 percent and 13 percent respectively of the Webster portion of the NEJFD. The estimated levy for this area is between \$236,000 and \$279,000.

North East Joint Fire District

The NEJFD was formed to provide fire protection to the Village of Webster, an area in the eastern half of Webster and an area in the north eastern third of Penfield. The district came into existence on January 1, 2005 to increase the level of fire protection in the service area.

The district is governed by five elected fire commissioners, each serving a staggered 5 year term. The district employs an executive director on a full time basis, a part time treasurer, and a part time secretary.

The Webster Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. (WFD) provides manpower to the NEJFD to respond to the majority of the district. NEJFD owns all the buildings, apparatus and essential equipment used by the WFD. The NEJFD also contracts with the UHFD to respond to calls in a portion of their response area. The operations of WFD and UHFD will be discussed elsewhere in the report.

Governance

The NEJFD is governed by five elected commissioners. Commission meeting minutes and notices of district activities are published on the district's website. All budgetary and planning information was readily available for review during the study process.

Each of the commissioners was interviewed during the study and certain common themes were identified and validated during the process:

- The district has about \$7 million in outstanding debt. It is following a plan to pay off the debt and fund most future purchases without need for additional bonds or raise tax rates.
- In March 2015, the NEJFD received a rating of "AA-" from Standard and Poor's Rating Service when refunding serial bonds.
- The building of Station 3 will become operational over the next year. The additional debt and operational costs will be within the capabilities of the current tax levy.
- The NEJFD has a very good, modern fleet of apparatus and a comprehensive replacement plan to ensure the fleet remains up to date.
- Station facilities are viewed as an important recruitment and retention tool.
- The NEJFD has purchased all necessary equipment for the WFD including turnout gear, SCBAs, duty uniforms, and firefighting equipment.
- The Executive Director and Treasurer positions are key to the success of the organization.
- The WFD has a healthy number of volunteers, good leadership depth, and a stable financial situation.
- The relationship with UHFD is a weak spot for the organization with friction in the relationship increasing after UHFD separated the ambulance from the fire department due to a contract dispute.
- There is concern about the financial and operational stability of UHFD in both the short and long term.
- NEJFD does not want to add operational paid staff, but they realize that it might become necessary if volunteers are not able to sustain their current effort.

Executive Director

The NEJFD has a full time executive director who is also an active volunteer with the WFD. He is a salaried full-time employee scheduled for forty hours per week and is responsible for ensuring the day to day operations of the district including both (soon to be three) fire stations, all apparatus, the district's financial operations, and working with the WFD chief on numerous operational issues. His position does not include any fire response requirements. However, he is a fully qualified and active volunteer with WFD and he is allowed to leave his position as executive director to respond to calls if he deems it appropriate.

Fire Stations

NEJFD owns two fire stations. Both are less than twenty years old and have seen either new construction or substantial renovation in recent years.

The **Enderlin Station** is the main station and is located in the Village of Webster at 35 South Avenue. The station has seven apparatus bays, three of which are drive through. There are about 13,425 square feet of habitable space and 9,260 of square feet in the apparatus bays and support areas. The building was completed in 2009. Key features of the station include:

- Separate male and female sleeping quarters for about 12 firefighters;
- Large training room with space for about 80;
- Multiple small conference rooms;
- A day room for firefighters at the station;
- Offices for the chief, deputy chiefs, other line officers, executive director, commissioners, secretary, and treasurer;
- Workout facility with cardiovascular and resistance training;
- Residential style kitchen;
- Secure computer server and radio rooms;
- Multiple spaces for equipment storage; and
- Elevator

Nearly all responses come from this station as the majority of firefighters live closer to this station and it is more centrally located in the district.

The **Roseland Station** is located in the south eastern portion of the district in Penfield at 1391 Salt Road. This station has four single depth bays. There are about 5,087 square feet of habitable space and 3,950 of apparatus bays and support areas. The building was built in 2002 and underwent renovation in 2008. Key features of the station include:

- Two bunk rooms with space for four to sleep;
- An administrative office;
- A day room for firefighters at the station;
- A large training room with space for about 80 people;
- A residential style kitchen; and

- A small conference room.

A third station is under construction in the northern portion of the district. This station will be located at 600 Phillips Road and is expected to be completed in December 2015. The station will have habitable space of 3,570 square feet and 3,500 of apparatus bays and support space. Key features of the station will include:

- Two pull through bays (each designed for a quint or engine plus small vehicle);
- Four bunk rooms capable of hosting one firefighter each; and
- A day room with a residential kitchen.

Apparatus

NEJFD owns all the apparatus and response equipment operated by the WFD. The district has developed a plan to replace engines every 20 years and ladder and rescue trucks every 25 years. The replacement plan for smaller apparatus is about every 15 years, but can be adjusted as needed. Based on the plan, the district replaced their ladder truck in 2014 and is planning to purchase an engine in 2017 and the heavy rescue in 2018. The ladder truck was purchased using a national bid specification for a cost below an individual specification. Considering the current inventory and operation of the existing apparatus, there is no anticipated need to modify the replacement plan. Two pieces of response apparatus will be relocated to Station 3 when it becomes operational, but the decision of which apparatus has not yet been made.

NEJFD Response Apparatus				
Unit	Type	Year	Description	Station
100	Truck	2014	Pierce Platform Ladder	1
102	Engine	1997	RD Murray Pumper	1
103	Engine	2007	Smeal Pumper	1
104	Engine	2001	American LaFrance Pumper	2
105	Engine	2010	Sutphen Pumper	1
107	EMS	2007	E-One Light Rescue	1
108	Rescue	1993	Saulsbury Hvy. Rescue	1
1026	Brush	2002	F-550 Brush Truck	2

Source: NEJFD

All apparatus are properly tested on an annual basis including pumps, hoses and ladder tests. The district maintains the testing records. The district also owns an off

road vehicle that can be used for either patient transport or carry fire suppression equipment. It is usually kept at Station # 2.

Equipment

NEJFD has a substantial inventory of firefighting equipment. Each piece of apparatus is provided with necessary equipment to perform their assigned tasks. There is a large inventory of modern fire hose in a variety of sizes. The table below lists the compliment of several key pieces of relatively expensive equipment. Radios and computer equipment are excluded from this list.

Webster Key Equipment	
AEDS	15
Air Bottles	198
SCBAs	71
Hydraulic Rescue Tools (Set)	3
eHydraulic Rescue Tools (Set)	1
Thermal Imager	6
Mobile Cascade	0
Smoke Ejectors	11
<i>Source: Dept. Inventory</i>	

Budget

The largest portion of the NEJFD budget is for the operations and maintenance of the district, its buildings and the WFD. Excluding the costs for UHFD, this portion of the budget has increased 14 percent from \$738,000 to \$838,000 from 2011 to 2015. During this time the overall operations budget (including UHFD), dropped 12 percent. The chief cause of the overall reduction of the operations budget is the 53 percent reduction in support to the UHFD now that the ambulance service is provided separately. The budget savings from the reduced UHFD contract was diverted to an apparatus reserve fund, a district wide expense.

NEJFD Budget Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014 (adopted)	2015 (adopted)
Contingency	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Personnel Services	\$ 78,293	\$ 84,055	\$ 87,021	\$ 87,400	\$ 92,600
New Equipment	\$ 97,425	\$ 93,972	\$ 164,696	\$ 127,250	\$ 98,250
Contractual	\$ 17,525	\$ 21,451	\$ 19,936	\$ 23,100	\$ 24,800
Station 1	\$ 74,016	\$ 61,640	\$ 82,988	\$ 86,949	\$ 88,350
Station 2	\$ 30,807	\$ 38,039	\$ 43,763	\$ 36,992	\$ 41,356
District Admin	\$ 46,637	\$ 28,743	\$ 30,185	\$ 25,934	\$ 36,899
Insurance	\$ 115,292	\$ 125,147	\$ 223,608	\$ 143,447	\$ 140,450
Station 1 Utilities	\$ 31,909	\$ 30,302	\$ 38,758	\$ 41,050	\$ 43,650
Station 2 Utilities	\$ 15,656	\$ 15,704	\$ 14,793	\$ 21,525	\$ 23,700
Inspections	\$ 14,752	\$ 17,617	\$ 15,927	\$ 22,500	\$ 32,500
Community Fire Prevention	\$ 3,171	\$ 1,901	\$ 1,942	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,500
Apparatus Fuel	\$ 21,634	\$ 21,584	\$ 22,755	\$ 23,000	\$ 23,000
Apparatus Repairs	\$ 63,666	\$ 95,014	\$ 90,677	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
Professional Services	\$ 56,813	\$ 67,078	\$ 15,992	\$ 23,800	\$ 23,800
Training & Meetings	\$ 23,801	\$ 25,894	\$ 18,262	\$ 19,000	\$ 29,000
Communications	\$ 24,599	\$ 12,354	\$ 7,026	\$ 16,400	\$ 16,400
Benefits & Health	\$ 21,531	\$ 23,323	\$ 35,996	\$ 31,200	\$ 31,200
Operations and Maintenance	\$ 737,527	\$ 763,818	\$ 914,325	\$ 823,047	\$ 838,455
Union Hill Services	\$ 474,444	\$ 475,000	\$ 475,000	\$ 475,000	\$ 225,000
Debt Service Expenses	\$ 758,510	\$ 767,510	\$ 758,666	\$ 739,942	\$ 751,201
Equipment Reserve	\$500,000	\$35,000	\$ -	\$ 180,000	\$ 490,000
Adjustments	\$ (90,452)	\$ 2,884	\$341,389	\$ -	
Total Expenses	\$ 2,380,029	\$ 2,044,212	\$ 2,489,380	\$ 2,217,989	\$ 2,304,656

Source: District Documents

Long Range Plan

The district has developed a long range financial plan that focuses on maintaining an equipment replacement schedule without needing to use bonds or other debt. The plan also includes projections to eliminate the existing debt from the recent building that occurred in the two stations. The plan includes modest annual inflation of 3 percent for apparatus and 2 percent for operations and maintenance. By following their plan and maintaining current operational expenses, the district will be able to replace their equipment on a regular schedule, pay off outstanding debt and maintain a total tax levy of about \$2.3 million for the next thirty years. If the current TAV trend remains and the levy remains constant as planned, the result would be a decreasing tax rate.

Tax Trend

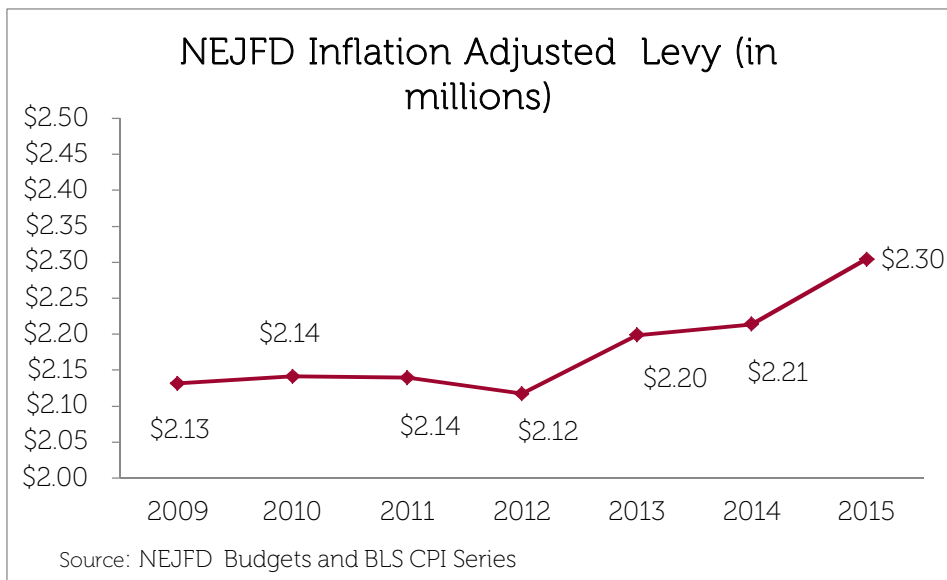
The district has undertaken several substantial initiatives in the last six years including rebuilding of the primary station, refurbishing a second station, acquiring land for a third station and replacing a ladder truck. To fund these substantial projects, the district's tax levy has grown about 20 percent since 2009, about 9% after adjusting for

roughly 11% inflation. However, because of growth in the TAV in the district, the tax rate in Penfield has increased 1 percent since 2009 and in Webster it has increased by 4 percent.

NEJFD Tax Levy and Tax Rate Trend							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tax Levy - Penfield	\$ 240,200	\$ 274,113	\$ 256,778	\$ 266,333	\$ 259,050	\$ 268,688	\$ 357,012
Tax Levy - Webster	\$ 1,685,457	\$ 1,711,246	\$ 1,759,320	\$ 1,787,196	\$ 1,907,568	\$ 1,947,301	\$ 1,946,944
Total Tax Levy	\$ 1,925,657	\$ 1,985,359	\$ 2,016,098	\$ 2,053,529	\$ 2,166,618	\$ 2,215,989	\$ 2,303,956
Tax Rate Penfield	\$ 0.9021	\$ 0.8589	\$ 0.8648	\$ 0.8581	\$ 0.8029	\$ 0.8100	\$ 0.9106
Tax Rate- Webster	\$ 0.9882	\$ 0.9638	\$ 0.9690	\$ 0.9734	\$ 1.0492	\$ 1.0518	\$ 1.0296

Source: NEJFD Budgets & Monroe County Data

The NEJFD tax levy has increased 9 percent faster than the rate of inflation over that time period and much of that increase has occurred in the last four years.



Webster Fire Department

The Webster Fire Department, Inc. (WFD) is a single company fire department that is an independent 501c3 corporation. It exists to provide manpower to respond to calls in the NEJFD and elsewhere as contracted. WFD owns real property that is used for its annual carnival and other events that help raise funds for the department. WFD also receives the Foreign Fire Insurance 2% tax for the benefit of the members. The WFD does not make specific expenditures to directly support response to emergencies (such as buying response equipment, turn out gear or paying for training) but they do

conduct activities to support their membership which in turn provides substantial benefit to the district by responding to calls.

Membership

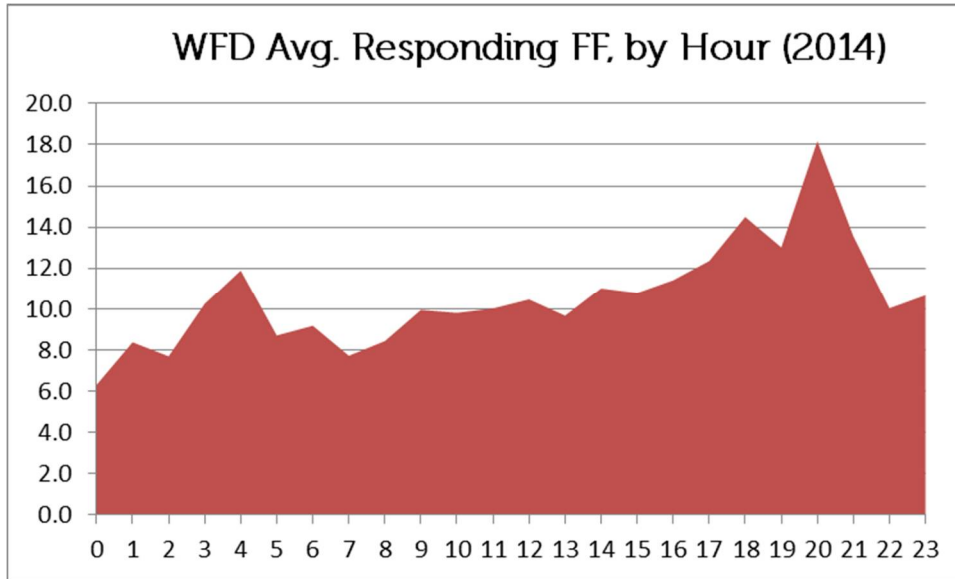
WFD currently has 71 active members. The membership number has been around 75 for many years. The turnover is steady with less than ten leaving active status each year and being replaced by a similar number. Prospective members are screened first by WFD and then by the District. WFD has several categories of membership other than active to accommodate people in a supportive role to the organization.

Webster Fire Fighters	
Interior Firefighters	48
Exterior Firefighters	9
Fire Police	5
Probationary	6
Support	3
Total Active Firefighters	71
Source: NEJFD	

In 2014, the membership responded to 847 events. For the study, a spreadsheet containing 837 calls was analyzed related to the responses by time of day. The overall average was 11.2 firefighters with the peak response at 8:00 pm with 18.2 and the lowest response of 6.3 at midnight.

4.4 percent of the time there were four or fewer responders to the calls. Most of those occurred during the early workday hours (7 to 9 am) or early evening hours (4 to 7 pm). Those were generally for lower priority calls such as lock outs, odor of gas or EMS events. 3.7 percent of the time more than 25 firefighters were recorded as responding to an event. These were either higher priority events, weather related issues, or occurred during drill time.

The "bunk in" program that encourages duty crews on overnights has led to a solid response during those times of the day. All firefighters receive physicals through the district on an annual basis.



Training

In 2014, WFD conducted 412.5 hours of in house training for its members at 150 different sessions. The training included weekly drill nights, a new member orientation series, driver training, bail out training, and a controlled burn at an abandoned structure. The most common classes were Bailout Training (18 times, 143 person-hours), Driver Training (20 times, 252 person-hours), and Recruit Training (17 times, 277 hours). Classes offered by Webster covered between 40 and 50 distinct topics. The members recorded in excess of 8,000 person hours of training in 2014. On average, 37 members attend the Monday night drills.

Members of the department must meet certain annual minimum training requirements to stay active with the department. The training curriculum is designed to meet OSHA standards and to ensure the membership is ready to provide an appropriate response to all events in the district. Members are required to annually complete a minimum of 30 hours of mandatory training.

Relationship with District

In discussions with members of the commission and officers of WFD, the relationship between the two entities was described almost completely in positive terms. The district is concerned about continuing to have enough volunteers and successful leadership in the WFD. The executive director for the district does aid WFD in record keeping and other administrative areas. The executive director role includes supporting, but not supplanting the key tasks of WFD.

Union Hill Fire Department

The NEJFD contracts with the Union Hill Volunteer Firemen's Association, Inc. (UHFD) to provide fire protection in the northeast portion of the district from a line just west of Salt Road east to the town line. The area is bounded to the north by Lake Ontario and the south by the Town of Penfield. This arrangement predates the creation of the NEJFD when the Town of Webster contracted for this service for a part of a fire protection district. Historically, UHFD provided ambulance service for the town of Webster in the NEJFD. However, in 2014 the ambulance service was separated into another corporation in order to allow it to bill for service¹. Union Hill Ambulance, Inc. (UHVAC) is a separate corporation, but shares the same board of directors as UHFD. UHVAC began operations in April 2014 and operated for many months without billing revenue being received due to insurance reimbursement practices. However, UHFD did receive the full contractual payment of \$475,000 from NEJFD for 2014.

UHFD and UHVAC also provide service to the Town of Ontario under an agreement with that town for service to portion of a fire protection district. 2015 is the first year where there is a contract for just fire response into NEJFD. The agreement is a one year agreement for \$225,000. The 2015 agreement succeeds a five year agreement that expired at the end of 2014.

Governance

UHFD is incorporated under the Not-For-Profit Corporation Laws with a purpose to organize and maintain a volunteer fire department and emergency relief squad to serve the public. Members are voted into the association by the existing membership. The membership selects both administrative and line officers from within its ranks. The UHVAC is a separate organization with a distinct set of by laws that were not analyzed for this report. Most members of UHVAC are also members of UHFD, except for two UHVAC members that are also members of WFD and therefore can't be members of more than one fire department.

The existing charter for the organization does not allow for people outside the organization to serve as an administrative officer.

Fire Stations

UHFD operates out of two stations. The headquarters is located at 70 Ridge Road in Union Hill, NY in the town of Ontario. The station has four back in truck bays, a ready room, a residential type kitchen, administrative offices, and four bunk rooms. There is

¹ Under NYS General Municipal Law § 209-b, fire company ambulances are not allowed to bill for transportation. However, independent ambulance companies are allowed to bill for service.

also a meeting room upstairs and two ambulance bays that are leased to UHVAC. The headquarters has limited storage space. UHFD paid staff are assigned to this station during their shifts.

Station Two is located three miles north at 155 County Line Road in the town of Webster. The station has two back in truck bays with storage space around the apparatus floor. There is a finished bathroom but little else in the way of amenities. The apparatus from this station respond to 3 to 4 calls per month. Most of the responses come from Station One. Station Two was completed in 2001.

Apparatus

UHFD owns four primary response fire apparatus. There is also an off road vehicle that can be used for fire suppression or transport of an injured person. The department does not have a specific capital plan or reserve fund for replacing fire apparatus. The plan is to replace the twenty year old engine (134) and the twenty five year old rescue (138) in the next several years. However, there is discussion about the utility of the rescue truck with one available in the departments on either side of it.²

UHFD Response Apparatus				
Unit	Type	Year	Description	Station
132	Engine	2008	International -E1 Engine	1
133	Engine	2000	Freightliner Am. Lafrance	1
134	Engine	1994	International -E1 Engine	2
138	Rescue	1989	Saulsbury Hvy. Rescue	1

Source: UHFD

The apparatus, hose and pump are tested annually. The records are kept by the department and were made available for the study.

Equipment

UHFD possess a substantial amount of firefighting equipment from hand tools to ladders. The list below only presents some of the key equipment that costs over \$500. Radios and computer equipment are excluded from this list. While the inventory of equipment is sufficient, some of it is approaching the end of

UHFD Key Equipment	
AEDS	7
Air Bottles	31
SCBAs	23
Hydraulic Rescue Tools (Set)	3
eHydraulic Rescue Tools (Set)	0
Thermal Imager	1
Mobile Cascade	1
Smoke Ejectors	8

Source: Dept. Inventory

² The ISO rating system requires a service company in the district and the rescue truck fills that role, so if it were not replaced there might be a negative impact on the rating for the service area.

its service life. Also, the department has only enough turnout gear to issue its firefighters a single set with very little spare equipment available.

Finance

The UHFD is funded primarily by contract revenue from the two municipalities (NEJFD and the Town of Ontario). Historically, the NEJFD contribution has accounted for more than 75 percent of the revenue of UHFD. The separation of the ambulance operation into a separate corporation has created a more complicated financial arrangement with NEJFD reducing its funding due to UHVAC being able to bill for services to support ambulance operations.

The UHFD owns the buildings and firefighting apparatus. It also employs the staff members that work for both the ambulance and fire department. The UHFD then receives payment from the UHVAC for their services and also rent for the space that is utilized in the station. Each entity pays for the other goods and services needed to conduct their business. UHVAC receives revenue from a separate fund drive and from billing for services.

The UHFD files a Form 990 with the IRS each year that summarizes their revenue, expenses, assets and liabilities. In 2013, the most recent year available, UHFD recorded a loss of \$45,356. Their cash on hand and loans payable to unrelated third parties were sizeable as they were borrowing to make substantial renovations to their main fire station. They ended 2012 with about \$63,000 in cash and savings.

UHFD switched accounting firms in 2012 and one impact was the change of the categorization of the revenue from the NEJFD from a "Program Service Revenue" for years 2011 and prior to "Contributions and Grants" for year 2012 and following years.

Union Hill Volunteer Firemen's Association 990 Form Summary					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Voting members of the governing body		6	7	7	7
Individuals employed		15	15	12	12
Volunteers			60	100	100
Contributions and grants	\$ 56,369	\$ 63,110	\$ 57,963	\$ 600,687	\$ 629,634
Program service revenue	\$ 438,492	\$ 534,341	\$ 584,663	\$ -	\$ -
Investment income	\$ 854	\$ 877	\$ 773	\$ 612	\$ 251
Other revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,042	\$ 3,030
Total Revenue	\$ 495,715	\$ 598,328	\$ 643,399	\$ 617,341	\$ 632,915
Salaries, compensation, benefits	\$ 146,130	\$ 140,378	\$ 187,322	\$ 199,697	\$ 161,142
Other expenses	\$ 432,918	\$ 407,764	\$ 439,633	\$ 402,033	\$ 517,129
Total Expenses	\$ 579,048	\$ 548,142	\$ 626,955	\$ 601,730	\$ 678,271
Net Revenue	\$ (83,333)	\$ 50,186	\$ 16,444	\$ 15,611	\$ (45,356)
Cash	\$ 7,043	\$ 43,102	\$ 43,901	\$ 19,549	\$ 742,581
Savings and temporary cash investments	\$ 22,067	\$ 46,525	\$ 62,790	\$ 43,641	\$ 4,038
Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	\$ 7,057	\$ 17,111	\$ 14,136	\$ -	\$ -
Land, buildings, and equipment cost or other basis, less accumulated depreciation	\$ 1,352,569	\$ 1,286,654	\$ 1,337,638	\$ 1,320,604	\$ 1,430,882
Other assets	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,505
Total assets	\$ 1,388,736	\$ 1,393,392	\$ 1,458,465	\$ 1,383,794	\$ 2,187,006
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 21,400	\$ 24,575	\$ 13,895	\$ -	\$ -
Unsecured notes and loans payable to unrelated third parties	\$ 190,248	\$ 141,543	\$ 200,852	\$ 132,054	\$ 971,761
Total liabilities	\$ 211,648	\$ 166,118	\$ 214,747	\$ 132,054	\$ 971,761
Unrestricted net assets	\$ 1,160,264	\$ 1,216,280	\$ 1,230,959	\$ 1,239,294	\$ 1,204,083
Temporarily restricted net assets	\$ 16,824	\$ 10,994	\$ 12,759	\$ 12,446	\$ 11,162
Total net assets or fund balances	\$ 1,177,088	\$ 1,227,274	\$ 1,243,718	\$ 1,251,740	\$ 1,215,245
Total liabilities and net assets/fund ba	\$ 1,388,736	\$ 1,393,392	\$ 1,458,465	\$ 1,383,794	\$ 2,187,006

UHFD's 2013 audit was not completed until February 2015. UHFD uses a modified cash basis of accounting that does not conform with GAAP. However, the audit did not have any negative findings. The revenues and expenses in the 2013 audit were 3 to 4 percent higher than those reported in the 2013 IRS 990 Form. Near the end of 2013, UHFD received a commercial construction loan to fund renovations to their building. This resulted in both substantial "Cash" and "Unsecured Notes and Loans" when compared to previous years.

UHFD closed on a 20 year mortgage in late 2014 for \$690,000 for the recent fire station renovations. The loan will have annual payments of about \$49,000 for its duration.

UHFD Budgets

UHFD has been running a deficit for each of the last three years according to budget figures that were provided as part of the study. A thorough analysis of the departments' financial operations was not a part of the scope of this study. However, a review of budgetary documents does provide important context for the operational health of the organization and the method of operation.

UHFD Budget Summary			
Income	2012	2013	2014
NEJFD	\$ 475,000	\$ 475,000	\$ 250,000
Town of Ontario	\$ 85,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 41,030
Fire Fund Drive	\$ 16,042	\$ 3,030	\$ 8,000
Other	\$ 39,302	\$ 22,137	\$ 2,344
Total Income	\$ 615,344	\$ 610,167	\$ 301,374
Expense			
Ambulance Equip.	\$ 28,755	\$ 15,112	\$ -
Amb. Fund Drive	\$ 837	\$ 1,716	\$ -
Admin Misc.	\$ 4,636	\$ 3,245	\$ 3,808
Admin Contracts	\$ 14,511	\$ 7,115	\$ 4,929
Building	\$ 39,106	\$ 43,779	\$ 56,174
Building Renovation	\$ 80,657	\$ 56,739	\$ 44,617
Communications	\$ 10,791	\$ 17,934	\$ 10,443
Debt	\$ 110,341	\$ 111,294	\$ 32,152
Fuel	\$ 30,437	\$ 31,643	\$ 13,746
Insurance	\$ 24,610	\$ 36,124	\$ 38,402
Fund Drive	\$ 5,477	\$ 221	\$ 6,754
Training/Members	\$ 31,821	\$ 35,420	\$ 37,990
Fire Equipment	\$ 36,115	\$ 47,613	\$ 48,696
Paid Staff	\$ 209,656	\$ 164,133	\$ 90,000
Other	\$ 12,886	\$ 20,672	\$ 30,830
Vehicles	\$ 23,501	\$ 30,117	\$ 28,822
Total Expense	\$ 664,138	\$ 622,876	\$ 447,363
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ (48,794)	\$ (12,709)	\$ (145,989)
Note: Figures are reported as actual by UHFD. 2014 includes only fire expenses, while prior years include ambulance operations.			
Source: UHFD			

2014 represented the first year that ambulance operations were separate from the fire department operations. The largest expenses for UHFD are for their paid staff, building operations, building renovation, fire equipment and insurance. This substantial

change has created many administrative challenges for the organization as they develop a new cost accounting scheme that properly allocates the cost. In the simplest terms, the ambulance organization is charged for services by the fire department including a portion of utilities, rental space for the apparatus, 70 percent of the paid staff salary, and other costs related to their operations. Those charges and revenue do not appear in this budget for 2014 and 2015.

During interviews, department leadership stated that they were able to cover deficits using some savings, short term loans and deferring payment of expense to vendors. For 2014, funds were exchanged between the UHFD and UHVAC on a temporary basis to allow both operations to remain solvent. It will likely be at least another full fiscal year until the appropriate cost accounting mechanism can be put into place that properly shows how funds are received and expended in the different aspects of UHFD.³

UHFD's Foreign Fire Insurance Tax 2 % revenue is given directly to a fund for the benefit of firefighters and doesn't appear in the operational budget that was presented above.

Firefighters

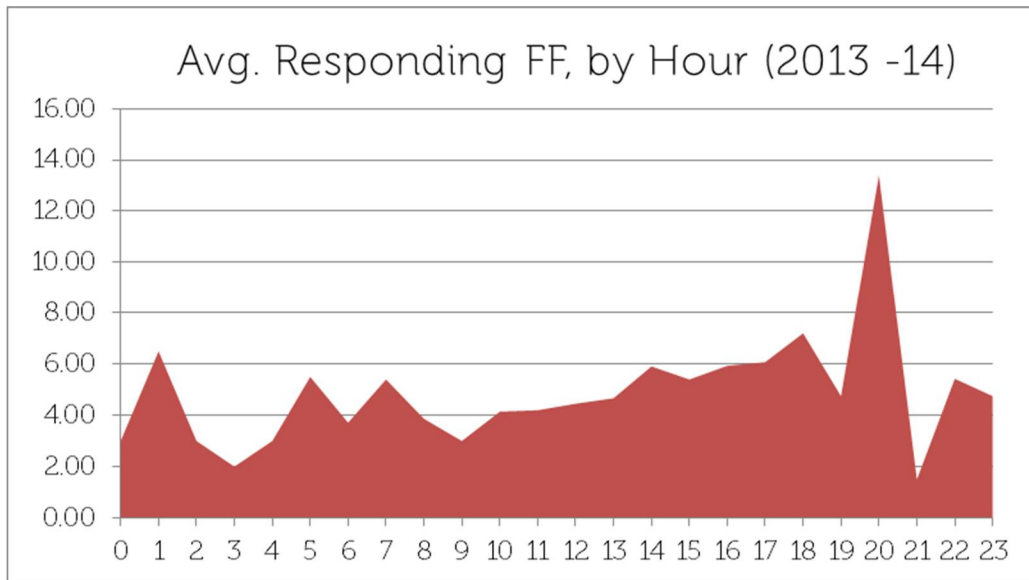
The UHFD has more than 100 members on their rolls. 54 are listed as active firefighters. There are two other members that are exclusively members of the ambulance squad.

Union Hill Fire Fighters	
Interior Firefighter	23
Exterior Firefighters	3
Fire Police	3
Probationary	12
Paid Staff	13
Total Active Firefighters	54
Source: UHFD	

UHFD has a paid staff of thirteen. There are two to four firefighters/EMTs working from 6 am to 6 pm, depending on the number of volunteers that are scheduled. The paid staff are responsible for answering any call that occurs for either EMS or fire. The goal is to ensure that both ambulances are staffed. Over time, more than 80 percent of calls received by Union Hill are for the ambulance. In 2014, 93 percent of calls were for the

³ The available budgets and financial records for UHFD were unaudited. Their presentation in this report should be considered for management purposes only and may be adjusted through normal accounting practices as they are reviewed.

ambulance. The paid staff are not available for fire calls when they are responding to an ambulance call. Volunteers are needed to respond during those instances. UHVAC pays UHFD 70 percent of the incurred payroll to compensate for the staff members that are used to respond for EMS calls.



The graph above includes the UHFD paid staff on duty and is based on calls in the Webster portion of UHFD's service area about 40 percent of the call volume. 55 percent of the time there were 4 or fewer responders to calls. On 8 percent of the calls there were 10 or more responders to calls. Many of the calls in the district can be handled by 4 or fewer firefighters (automatic alarms, EMS responses, hazardous conditions). There were four structure fires (all between 7:00 am and 1:00 pm) in the district during the two years and the average number of firefighters was 13. However, on one of them only four responded.

In addition to using paid staff, UHFD also has a program that encourages volunteers to stay at the station from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am. It is reported that about 5 to 7 people are signed up for each night of the week. These members will also staff the ambulance during this time.

All active firefighters in the department undergo a physical on an annual basis to meet compliance with OSHA regulations. Department records show that 38 had completed the requirement for 2014 with the department's physician. Personal communication with department officials indicates that the remaining firefighters are paid firefighters that have completed the physicals with other departments.

Training

The Union Hill Fire Department offered 135 hours of classes attended by an average of 8 people, for a total of 1,122 person-hours⁴. The most common classes at Union Hill were Hoseline Advancement (offered 3 times, for a total of 84 person-hours) and SCBA Mask Confidence and Operations (offered 13 times, for a total of 147 person-hours), as well as Equipment Location, Ground Ladder Operations, Pump Operations, Rescue Tool Operations, and Roof Saw Operations, all of which were offered 8 times and totaled 67 person-hours for each topic. Classes offered by Union Hill covered between 20 and 25 distinct topics.

Relationship with District

UHFD leadership reports that the long term relationship with the NEJFD commissioners has been positive, but that the changes related to the creation of UHVAC have created some turmoil between the two entities. The UHFD leadership believes that clarity of the long term level of support from NEJFD will help solidify the relationship.

Fire Response

ISO Ratings

The Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rates each community in the United States with a Public Protection Classification (PPC). The PPC rates each department service area on a scale of 1 to 10. Lower numbers indicate better fire protection in the community. The PPC evaluates three primary areas: Receiving and Handling of Fire Alarms, the Fire Department and Water Supply. The ratings referenced in this report are from ISO studies conducted in 2007. NEJFD has a long term goal of a single ISO rating for its entire district..

⁴ This excludes long duration classes offered by other agencies such as EMT classes and Firefighter I classes.

ISO Ratings for NEJFD					
	Possible	Penfield	Town	Village	UHFD
Class		4	4	4	5
Call Handling	10	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.9
FD- Apparatus	22	20.6	20.1	20.6	17.6
FD- Distribution	4	3.2	1.2	3.2	2.1
FD- Personnel	15	4.7	4.7	4.7	1.7
FD- Training	9	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.6
FD Total	50	32.5	30.0	32.5	24.0
Water System	40	29.4	32.5	29.4	21.6
Divergence		-1.7	-4.25	-1.7	-1.39
Total	100	69.53	67.62	69.53	54.12
Points to Next Level		0.47	2.38	0.47	5.88
Source: Insurance Service Organization					

The NEJFD is split into 4 different ISO districts based on its historic divisions. All areas served by the WFD are rated as a 4 and the area served by UHFD is rated as a 5. The Call Receiving is consistent factor for all districts and is rated very highly. There is some variability for Water Supply rating with it being slightly lower for the area served by Union Hill and slightly higher in the Town of Webster based on water flow tests. Some of the test hydrants for Union Hill were in the Town of Ontario and don't reflect the conditions in the Town of Webster.

WFD Fire Department Rating

The WFD scored 32.5 out of 50 points for the Village and Penfield and a 30 for the Town of Webster. The variation between the areas is based on the distribution of fire stations that will be improved when Station # 3 is completed. WFD was evaluated favorably for apparatus with 20 out of 22 points. The score for personnel was relatively low with only 4.7 out of a possible 15 points⁵. This score would be improved by either adding paid staff or increasing volunteer activity. The score for training was also relatively low with only 3.96 out of 9 points. It was noted that complete records for training should be kept and it appears to CGR that this has been addressed by the current record system that was not in place in 2007. Also, it was noted that pre-planning inspections for commercial and institutional locations should be done by company members on a semi-annual basis. If WFD were able to score a few more

⁵ According to its website "ISO credits the personnel available to respond to first alarms for structure fires. For personnel not normally in the fire station (on-call and off-duty members), ISO reduces credit for the responding members to reflect the time needed for notification, travel, and assembly on the fireground. ISO then applies an upper limit for the credit for personnel because it is impractical for a very large number of personnel to operate a piece of apparatus."

points in the fire department area, it would move to a 3 rating. NEJFD should look to be rerated after Station # 3 is on line and it has a good chance to improve its rating especially if training documentation and inspections improve along with the new station. It could be difficult to improve in the area of personnel without adding paid staff or a substantial increase in volunteer activity.

UHFD Fire Department Rating

The UHFD scored 24 out of 50 points. UHFD scored relatively well with 17.6 out of 22 points for apparatus. Some of the deductions were related to the lack of reserve apparatus, not enough length of hose on an engine, and other minor equipment deficiencies. This score would not substantially improve without purchasing of additional apparatus⁶. UHFD scored 2.1 out of 4 for distribution indicating that there are areas of the district that are outside 1.5 miles from an engine or 2.5 miles from a service company. UHFD scored poorly for personnel with only a 1.7 out of 15 possible points. This situation has since been addressed with the addition of paid staff during daytime hours and a reassessment would likely bring a higher score in this category. UHFD also had a low score in the area of training. This score would likely be higher based on an improved record keeping system. However, the department would still need to document preplanning and inspections for large facilities. It is possible that in a reassessment, UHFD would have a net improvement of six points to bring it to a Class 4, but significant changes would need to occur and be documented since the last evaluation.

Call Volume

For this report, information for both WFD and UHFD was requested from the departments and the Rochester-Monroe County Emergency Communications Department (ECD). The information for 2013 and 2014 had some variability between each source of data. ECD reported about 90 more calls for WFD in each 2013 and 2014 that are EMS calls that occur in the WFD service area, but are minor medical complaints and WFD is not dispatched without a specific request from another public safety agency. The ECD data is used in the report because it is common between the departments and was available in electronic format that was easy to analyze. There might be small variations between the ECD data and internal department data, but they

⁶ The ISO does not consider the regular use of automatic aid for key resources such as ladder trucks or service companies. UHFD appropriately relies on these resources due to its relatively small geography.

are of little consequence. In regards to UHFD, only fire department responses were considered⁷.

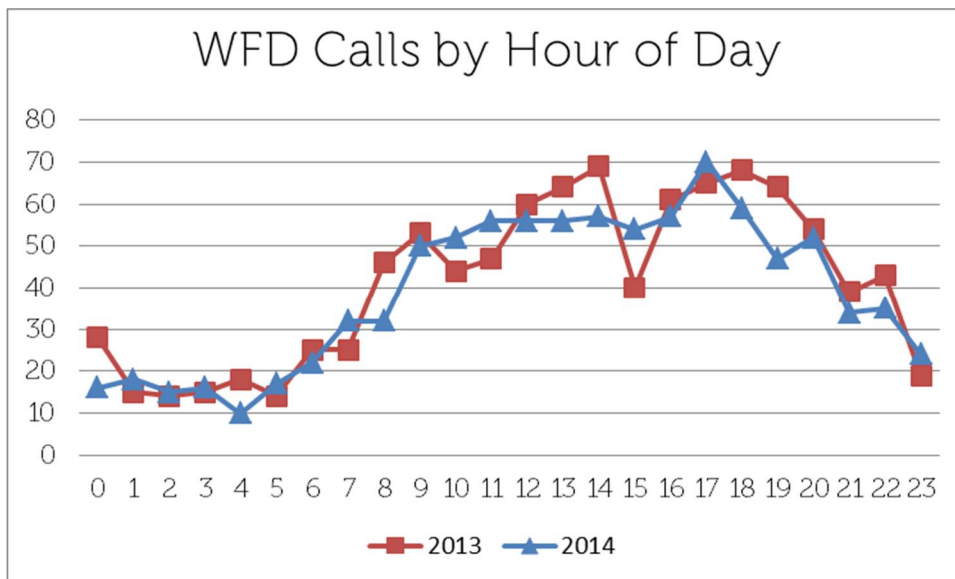
Call Volume Summary			
	2013	2014	Calls Per Day
Webster	990	937	2.64
UHFD- NEJFD	84	87	0.23
UHFD- Other	141	158	0.41

Source: ECD

Sundays were generally slower call volume wise for both departments, but there was no clear “busiest” day for either department. The calls were distributed essentially evenly across the year. Because of the difference in scale of call volume, each department will be discussed separately.

Webster Fire Responses

WFD responds to an average of 2.64 calls per day or about 80 calls per month. The peak call volume is consistent between about 9 am and 9 pm. 70 percent of calls occur during those 12 hours. 52 percent of calls occur between 9 am and 5 pm.



Over the last two years, the top five calls types (Automatic Alarm, Fire, EMS –Priority One, Fumes, and Motor Vehicle Accident – Priority One) accounted for eighty percent of the alarms in the district.

⁷ The split between Union Hill’s calls in NEJFD and Ontario is based on ECD CAD data. UHFD reports 100 calls in 2014 and 93 calls in 2013. The net number of calls is the same, but the physical address of the call can vary from the address reported to 911.

Type of Call by Time of Day Ordered by Total Call Frequency (2013 and 2014)							
Start	mid	4:00	8:00	noon	4:00	8:00	
End	3:59	7:59	11:59	3:59	7:59	11:59	Total
AMTC	33	33	84	92	107	42	391
FIRE	24	33	61	77	110	74	379
EMS1	24	39	74	78	71	55	341
FUMS	17	14	65	65	74	43	278
MVA1	9	10	28	41	39	24	151
STRC	7	8	18	23	24	19	99
WIRE	3	8	11	26	17	13	78
EMS2	12	6	14	13	17	11	73
WATR	1	4	6	18	11	5	45
FILL	6	5	5	7	5	3	31
Other	1	3	14	16	16	11	61
Total	137	163	380	456	491	300	1927

Source: ECD

Response Times

Response times are a common measurement of performance in the fire service and the public generally expects quick response times. However, many fire departments are moving away from using lights and sirens on every event because few events are true emergencies that necessitate a rapid response. WFD (and UHFD) choose to respond in a slower, safer fashion without lights and sirens to a significant proportion of their calls where a speedy response is not needed based on information available at dispatch. Therefore, it is preferred to judge department performance based on response to high priority calls. Unfortunately, the current data set doesn't differentiate between low and high priority calls.

Response times were calculated from ECD data⁸ using the time that WFD was assigned the call to the time⁹ that the agency's first unit¹⁰ was recorded as on scene by ECD. WFD had an average response time of 7.3 for the first unit to arrive on scene. This includes all types of calls recorded by ECD. For about 35 percent of calls, there was not a unit recorded as going on scene by ECD. A sample of calls that didn't have a unit on

⁸ While ECD data is consistent among both departments and provides a solid basis for analyzing responses, it can be flawed because of human error in failing to record times properly, failing to report a change in status using the radio or a variety of other factors.

⁹ A true measurement of response would also include the time needed to process the call at the 911 center. This often adds two minutes to the time that a caller perceives as the response time.

¹⁰ In some cases, the first unit is a chief's vehicle.

scene included automatic alarms, MVAs and low priority EMS calls that could likely have resulted in a cancellation enroute.

	50%	70%	90%	N
12 to 3:59 am	8.8	12.0	16.7	96
4 to 7:59 am	8.5	10.8	15.1	101
8 to 11:59 am	6.9	9.0	12.9	237
12 to 3:59 pm	7.1	9.1	13.2	291
4 to 7:59 pm	6.9	8.8	12.2	318
8 to 11:59 pm	7.6	9.3	13.5	198
Total	7.3	9.3	13.4	1,241

Source: ECD data

One measure of service is the amount of time that it takes to respond to 90 percent of an agency's calls. WFD responds to 90 percent of its calls in less than 13.4 minutes. The slowest response times are between midnight and 7:59 am. The fastest response times are between 8 am and noon and 4 pm and 8 pm. WFD only keeps staff in the station during overnight hours, yet these hours are the ones with the slowest response times. Apparatus had a response time slower than the first unit by about 1.3 minutes at each time interval.

A second layer of analysis is looking at drive times which is the measurement of time from when the unit reports they are on the way to the event to when they are recorded as on scene of the call. The drive times for the first unit on scene of a call were consistent at all hours of the day at about 3.7 minutes for an average and less than 7.8 minutes for 90 percent of calls. The drive times in the district will be reduced when the new station opens.

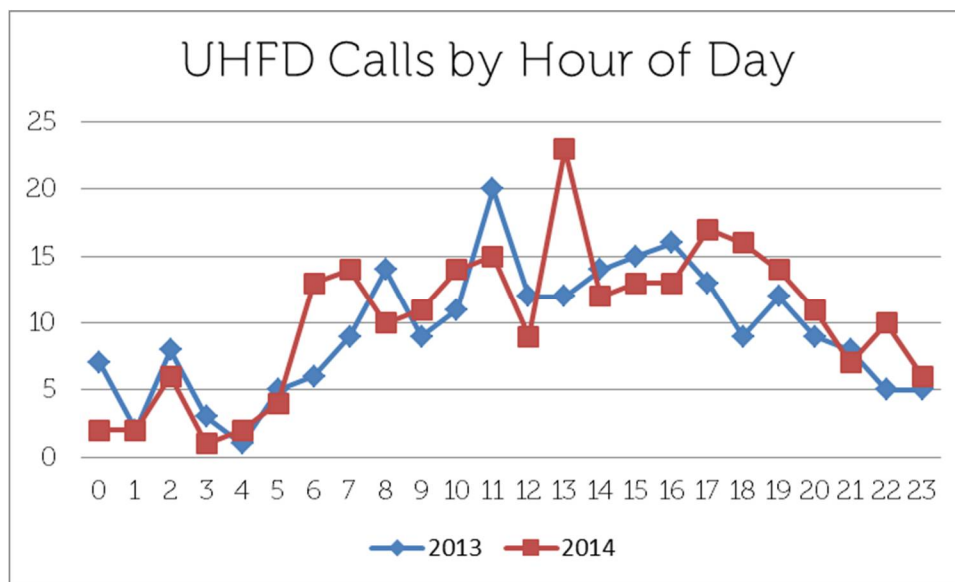
	50%	70%	90%	N
12 to 3:59 am	4.0	5.1	8.8	96
4 to 7:59 am	3.8	5.7	9.1	101
8 to 11:59 am	3.7	5.1	7.5	237
12 to 3:59 pm	3.6	5.0	7.8	292
4 to 7:59 pm	3.6	5.2	7.5	318
8 to 11:59 pm	3.7	4.9	7.6	201
Total	3.7	5.1	7.8	1,245

Source: ECD data

Union Hill Fire Responses

UHFHD responds to calls in two towns, each in a different county. However, all calls are dispatched by Monroe County ECD. A 911 caller in Wayne County speaks to the Wayne County 911 center. That center takes the information about the event and then via radio relays the information to the Monroe County Fire Dispatcher. These calls are almost always coded as being in the Town of Ontario. However, on occasion they are actually in Webster. UHFHD uses the location they responded to as the location for the event. The calls in NEJFD represent only about 40 percent of the fire responses for UHFHD. In addition, UHFVA responds to several thousand EMS transport calls in the two districts. UHFHD responds to 0.27 fire calls per day or about 8.3 calls per month in the NEJFD.

For this report, **all** UHFHD fire responses were analyzed and serve as the basis for the following charts and commentary. In 2014, NEJFD calls¹¹ represented 40 % of the volume and in 2013 it was 38 %. The calls in NEJFD are comparable to the calls in Ontario in type, time of day, and day of week.



Over the last two years, the top five call types (Fire, Automatic Alarm, MVA- Priority One, EMS Priority One and Fumes) accounted for seventy five percent of the alarms in the district.

¹¹ Location data based on ECD information. UHFHD data shows about 10 more calls per year in Webster based on the actual location of the call found by the responding units.

Start	mid	4:00	8:00	noon	4:00	8:00	
End	3:59	7:59	11:59	3:59	7:59	11:59	Total
FIRE	8	13	25	20	20	17	103
AMTC	8	5	16	17	28	10	84
MVA1	4	13	7	10	19	5	58
EMS1	3	3	12	13	13	10	54
FUMS	3	6	15	16	9	5	54
WIRE	4	2	4	10	3	6	29
STRC	0	3	8	5	5	1	22
EMS2	1	1	5	6	1	2	16
VFIR	0	2	3	1	5	2	13
WATR	0	1	5	3	3	0	12
Other	0	5	4	9	4	3	25
Total	31	54	104	110	110	61	470

Response Times

As described in the WFD section, UHFD also chooses to respond without lights and sirens a substantial portion of their calls. Response times were calculated from ECD data using the time that UHFD was assigned the call to the time that the agency was recorded as on scene by ECD. UHFD had an average response time of 7.6 for the first unit to arrive on scene. This includes all types of calls recorded by ECD. For about 30 percent of calls, there was not a unit recorded as going on scene by ECD. A sample of calls that didn't have a unit on scene included automatic alarms and MVAs calls that could likely have resulted in a cancellation enroute.

	50%	70%	90%	N
12 to 3:59 am	8.5	10.1	11.8	22
4 to 7:59 am	8.6	10.0	23.0	29
8 to 11:59 am	7.4	8.6	12.3	80
12 to 3:59 pm	7.7	9.7	12.6	74
4 to 7:59 pm	6.9	8.3	12.4	79
8 to 11:59 pm	9.4	10.8	13.0	44
Total	7.6	9.7	12.7	328

One measure of service is the amount of time that it takes to respond to 90 percent of an agency's calls. UHFD responds to 90 percent of its calls in less than 12.7 minutes. The slowest response times are between 8 pm and 8 am. The fastest response times

are between 8 am and 8 pm. Apparatus have essentially the same response time as the first unit for the agency indicating that they are often the first unit.

Another layer of analysis is looking at drive times which is the measurement of time from when the unit reports they are on the way to the event to when they are recorded as on scene of the call. The drive times for the first unit on scene of a call were consistent at all hours of the day at about 4.6 minutes for an average and less than 9.3 minutes for 90 percent of calls. When UHFD responds to calls in Webster, their response times are about 30 seconds quicker than their responses to calls in Ontario.

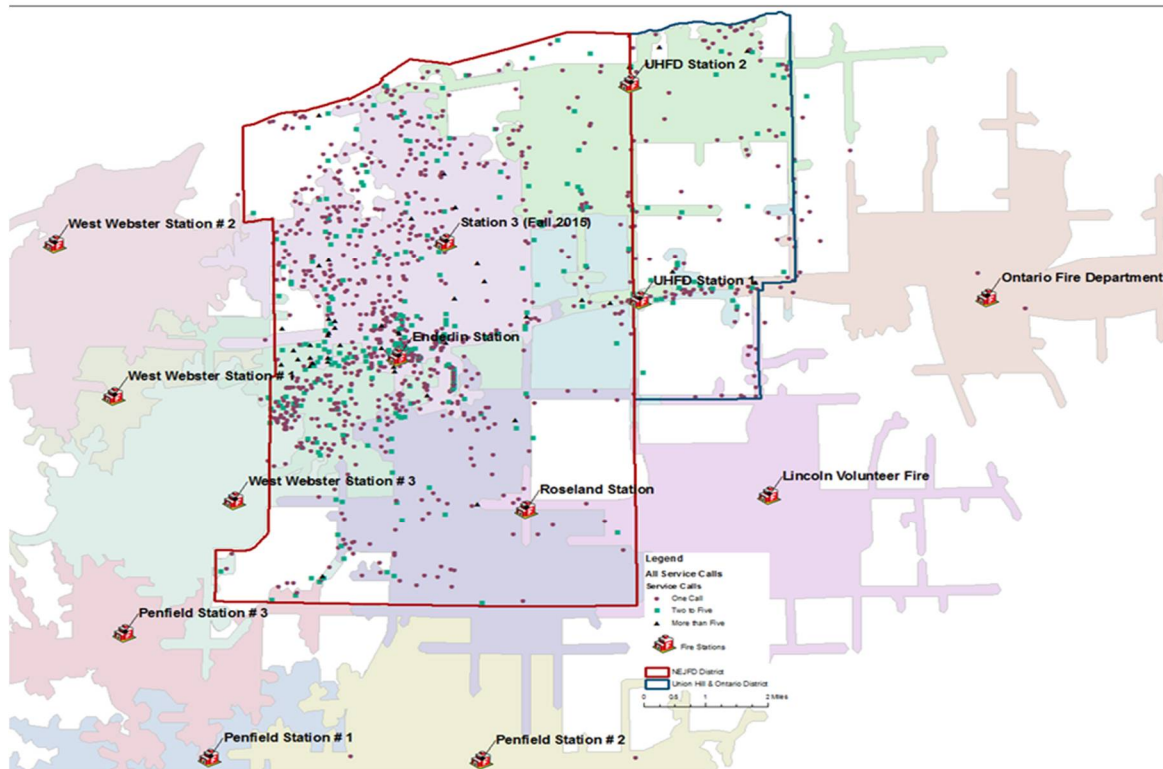
	50%	70%	90%	N
12 to 3:59 am	3.6	5.0	6.8	42
4 to 7:59 am	5.3	7.0	11.6	57
8 to 11:59 am	5.0	6.5	9.8	120
12 to 3:59 pm	4.4	6.3	9.0	111
4 to 7:59 pm	4.1	5.9	8.4	146
8 to 11:59 pm	4.7	7.2	9.2	69
Total	4.6	6.3	9.3	545

Geographic Response Profile

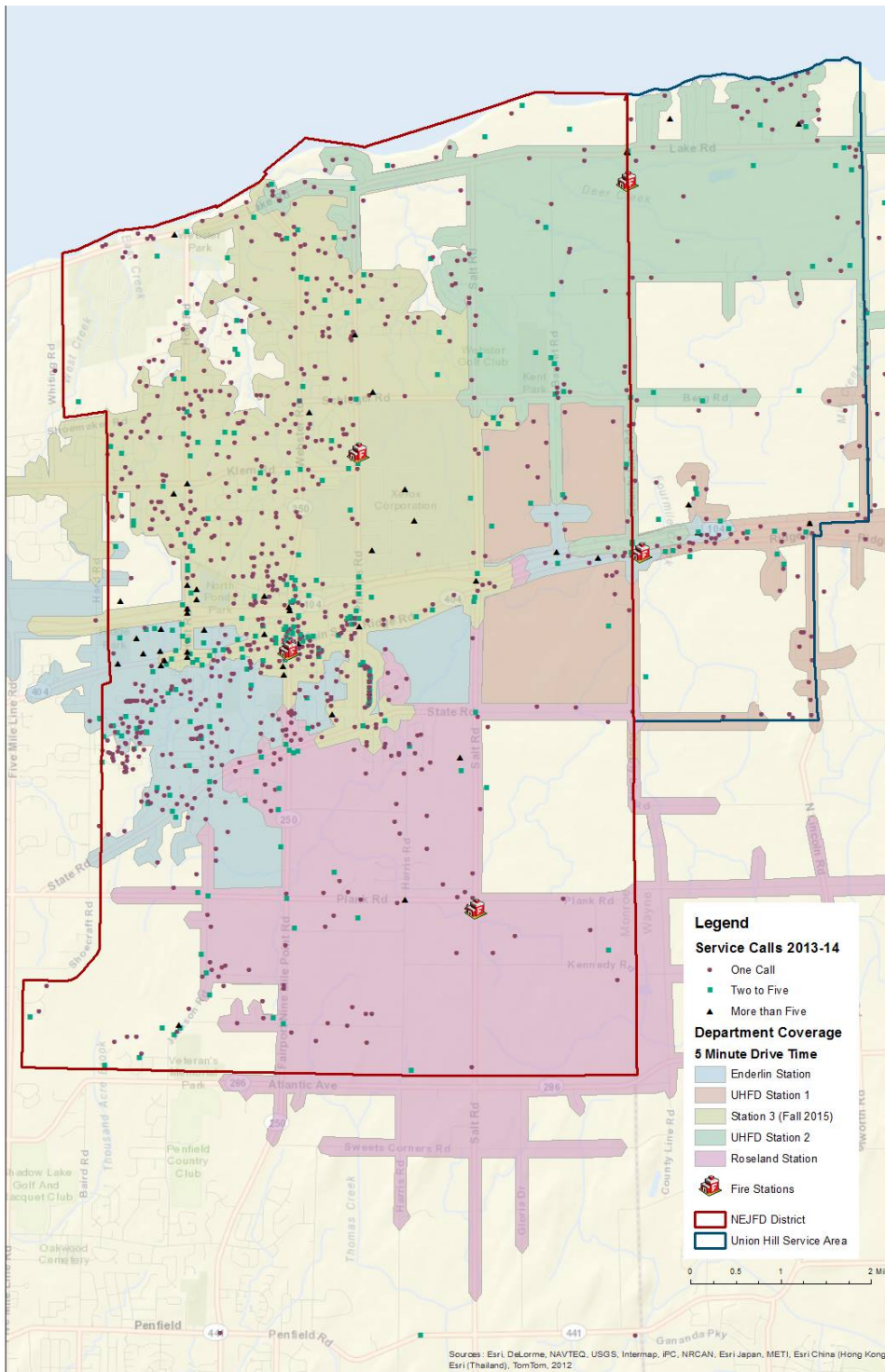
CGR used the data from ECD to create several maps that illustrate the responses by both WFD and UHFD. All calls for both departments were included on the response maps, including calls in the Town of Ontario. Larger format maps are in the appendix.

Map 1: Location of Fire Stations In and Around NEJFD

The stations owned by NEJFD¹² are in their district as is UHFD's Station # 2. UHFD's Station # 1 is located in Ontario.. In the four districts that border NEJFD there are seven fire stations and there is also a station in the Town of Ontario in the district that is on UHFD's eastern border. The map shows the five minute drive time from each station which is equivalent to the 2.5 mile drive distance considered by the ISO for truck responses. In some cases, those stations are substantially closer to addresses in the NEJFD than either WFD or UHFD stations. The most obvious example is in the southwest portion of the district in Penfield where West Webster Station # 3 and Penfield Fire Station # 3 are both closer to multiple addresses. It should also be noted that an area near Webster Park is outside the 5 minute drive time from the location of Station # 3 and also West Webster's stations.

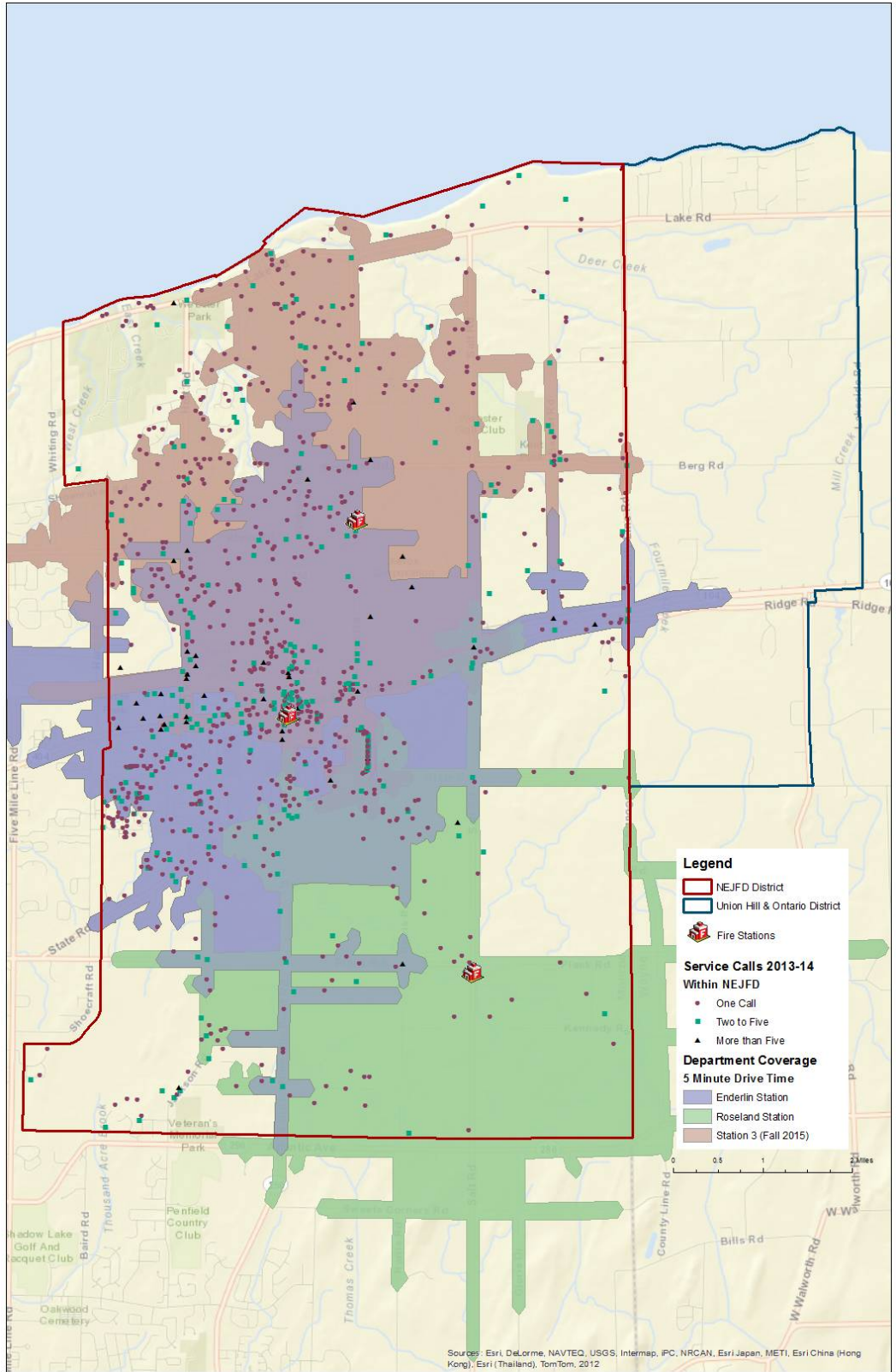


¹² The planned NEJFD Station # 3 was considered operational in this analysis.



Map 2: Location of Calls in NEJFD and UHFD

The locations of all calls responded to by WFD and UHFD in their home districts are mapped. Locations with 2 to 5 events are shown as squares and those greater than 5 calls in the 2 year period are shown as a triangle. 90% of calls are located inside the five minute drive response areas of the five station locations that exist or will be built. Note: some of the unshaded areas are because there are no houses locate in that area.



Map 3: Location of Calls in NEJFD

This map focuses just on call locations in NEJFD and the stations operated by WFD. 90 percent of call locations are within a five minute drive of one of the three NEJFD stations. Areas in the northeast, northwest and southwest corners are outside the five minute drive time.

Map 4: Locations of Firefighters

A map was developed to show the reported addresses of the firefighters in each department, excluding the paid staff from UHFD. The map was analyzed by CGR and shared with NEJFD Commissioners. However, it is not included in the report to protect the privacy of the firefighters.

There are several instances of more than one firefighter at an address and also post office boxes that were not used to plot locations. Nearly all (94 percent) WFD firefighters live in the NEJFD and their service area. The map shows that about twenty will be closer to Station 3 than they are to Station 1. Very few WFD firefighters live near to Station 2. About half of UHFD firefighters are near their fire stations, the rest are scattered through NEJFD and in other nearby towns. 78 percent of UHFD firefighters live in their service area. (Several UHFD firefighters were not shown because they live off this version of the map.)

Observations on Existing Conditions

The following observations about existing conditions provide context for changes to the existing operations broken into several broad categories.

Administrative

- When compared to other fire districts in the eastern and northeastern portion of Monroe County, the NEJFD has a relatively low tax rate.¹³

2015 Tax Rates Comparison		
	Per Assessed 1000	Difference from NEJFD Webster
NEJFD (Penfield)	\$ 0.92	\$ (0.12)
NEJFD (Webster)*	\$ 1.03	\$ -
WWFD (Penfield)	\$ 1.01	\$ (0.02)
WWFD (Webster)*	\$ 1.01	\$ (0.02)
Brighton (Brighton)	\$ 2.21	\$ 1.17
Henrietta	\$ 2.40	\$ 1.37
Laurelton	\$ 2.46	\$ 1.42
Penfield (Penfield)	\$ 0.85	\$ (0.19)
Pittsford (Pittsford)	\$ 0.64	\$ (0.39)
Point Pleasant	\$ 1.80	\$ 0.77
Ridge Culver	\$ 4.46	\$ 3.42
Saint Paul	\$ 2.77	\$ 1.74
Sea Breeze	\$ 1.93	\$ 0.90
West Brighton	\$ 1.50	\$ 0.47
* Webster rate converted to full value assessment for comparison.		
Source: Monroe County Tax Rate Data		

- NEJFD's tax rate and inflation adjusted tax levy have risen steadily since 2009. The tax rate in Webster has risen from \$0.99 per \$1000 to \$1.03 per \$1000 while the tax levy has increased 9 percent faster than the rate of inflation over that time period.

¹³ The table uses full assessed value for all tax rates.

-
- NEJFD has substantial debt related to its building projects. However, the Board has a solid financial plan to continue improvements and retire the debt without further raising tax rates. By following their plan and maintaining current operational expenses, the district will be able to replace their equipment on a regular schedule, pay off outstanding debt and maintain a total tax levy of about \$2.3 million for the next thirty years. If the current TAV trend remains, the result would be a decreasing tax rate.
 - NEJFD has strong administrative support from the Executive Director and Treasurer as well as an active and involved Board.
 - The value of the NEJFD contract with UHFD in 2015 is about 10 percent of the tax levy while the estimated TAV of the area covered by UHFD is estimated to be between 10 and 13 percent of total TAV of the district.
 - UHFD is undergoing substantial operational and administrative transition as a result of separating the ambulance operation from the fire operation. The transition impacts the fiscal operations of the organization and has inhibited long range planning. This transition is placing a large burden on the volunteer administration of UHFD.
 - UHFD's financial statements related to the fire department present an incomplete picture of the health of the organization because of the separation of the ambulance operation and fire service operations is still an evolving process that requires substantial adjustments to cost accounting and organizational operations. Further, this report focused on the fire operations of UHFD, not the whole organization.
 - NEJFD has provided the WFD with excellent equipment and facilities with which to provide response to the district.
 - UHFD has the essential equipment and supplies to operate, but because of tenuous fiscal conditions the inventory is not as large or diverse as WFD.

Operational

- WFD has sufficient volunteer manpower to provide an adequate response to calls in the entire NEJFD.
- WFD responds to calls with more firefighters on average than UHFD.
- Both departments use automatic aid to ensure sufficient resources are available.
- Response times for both WFD and UHFD are comparable.
- Both WFD and UHFD response times are lengthened when responders need to get to the station before responding or maybe sleeping at the time of the call

- Once NEJFD Station # 3 is in service, the location of the NEJFD stations are appropriate to provide five minute or less driving response to 90 % of calls in the district, including the area currently handled by UHFD.
- Certain areas of NEJFD might receive better response if the primary response came from another fire district. (WFD utilizes automatic aid on serious events in all parts of the district and this ensures the closest resources are sent to those calls.)
- NEJFD and WFD should look at improving resource availability from Station # 2, particularly if building in Penfield continues to increase the number of calls in that area.
- UHFD relies on paid employees to ensure responses to their fire and EMS runs.
- In direct comparison, the two departments have similar cost per call, cost per resident, and calls per 1000 residents. UHFD has more volunteers per 1000 residents than WFD.

Department Comparison			
	WFD	UHFD	Combined
Population (est)	23800	5700	29500
Interior Vol. FF	48	23	71
Volunteers per 1000 residents	2.0	4.0	2.4
Engines	4	3	7
Ladders	1	0	1
Fire Calls (2014)	937	245*	1,182
Calls per 1000 Residents	39.4	43.0	40.1
Fire Service Cost (2014)	\$1,743,989	\$ 447,363	\$ 2,191,352
Cost per Fire Call	\$ 1,861	\$1,825.97	\$ 1,854
Cost per Resident	\$ 73	\$ 78	\$ 74
90 % Response Time -1st Unit	13.4	12.7	n/a
Avg. Responders per Call	11.2	5.0	
<i>* Includes calls both in Webster and Ontario</i>			

Almost all (87%) communities between 10,000 and 25,000 residents in the United States are served by a fire department with at least some career staff¹⁴. The median ratio of volunteer firefighters per 1000 people in comparable communities in the northeast is 1.87. According to a national survey, WFD and UHFD's numbers of volunteers are slightly better than the median number of volunteers in the northeast when considered as a single area.

¹⁴ NFPA, US Fire Department Profile, 2012, October 2013

Options for Improvement

The NEJFD has a variety of options that are available for improving service to its residents. As illustrated in the report, the NEJFD is providing quality service at a relatively low cost to its residents. The options fall into two major categories: options that deal with the relationship with UHFD (the first four) and options that identify other areas for improvement. Each option will require specific evaluation by the Board of Commissioners for cost effectiveness, functional efficacy and long term sustainability.

Status Quo

NEJFD could continue to support their own fire company WFD for the majority of the district and contract with UHFD for a portion of the district. The NEJFD currently provides UHFD with enough financial support that the cost per call and cost per resident is essentially equal between the departments.

All residents of the district will continue to receive a quality response and the two departments will work together on serious events. WFD will likely continue to augment the response to UHFD with both personnel and equipment, particularly for serious incidents.

However, the UHFD is in a tenuous financial condition after the separation of the ambulance from the fire department and its relative small size has prevented it from funding key operational aspects. UHFD may have difficulty retiring its current debt and maintaining adequate funds for operation going forward.

Stop Contracting with UHFD

The Webster Fire Department appears to have sufficient manpower and equipment to handle the approximate 10 percent increase in calls that occur in the district if WFD expands into the UHFD area. WFD already responds to all serious events in the Union Hill portion of the district (and also into Ontario). This option would require administrative changes to response protocols and should not be implemented until after Station # 3 is operational.

There would be increased demand on responding personnel especially since the calls would likely occur in times already of peak demand. This increased demand could place additional burden on the staff and may adversely impact their willingness to respond. There would be additional wear and tear on apparatus and additional use of disposable equipment that might increase costs, but the savings would still be close to the entire contract amount.

Although not a direct concern of NEJFD, ending the contract with UHFD would adversely impact UHFD's ability to operate and may cause them to cease operating as a fire department. NEJFD provides about 70 percent of the revenue to UHFD. If UHFD ceased operation, UHVAC could also be adversely impacted.

In the event that NEJFD looks to move in this direction, it should consider working with UHFD and UHVAC to ensure a smooth transition to the future state including inviting members to transfer into WFD and providing administrative support to the department.

Enhance Operational and Administrative Support of UHFD

NEJFD could expand their contract with the UHFD and assist them with administrative actions. The relationship between the NEJFD and UHFD appears to have become adversarial, especially in the area of funding and an imbalance of support between the two organizations. While the precise cause could be debated and allowed to linger, both parties could work together to improve the operations and administrative situation of UHFD.

The current conditions did not develop overnight and would need effort from both parties to improve. Suggestions for improvement would be a return to a long term contract. A long term contract could assist UHFD in funding its capital expenses, and provide essential equipment for firefighters, such as SCBAs and turnout gear. NEJFD could also consider providing administrative support, purchasing insurance as a single entity and conducting planning as a single department. As part of any additional support, NEJFD should consider including specific performance requirements in the service contract and requiring open exchange of all information related to UHFD operations.

Consider Efficiency and Collaboration Opportunities

NEJFD and WFD already collaborate with multiple organizations on operational aspects of their business and in certain administrative functions. The NEJFD should actively seek out further opportunities to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. The NEJFD could partner with any of the municipalities served and neighboring fire districts to put together a plan to save one percent of the property tax levy in compliance with the state's Government Efficiency Plan¹⁵.

¹⁵ NYS Property Tax Freeze Credit Guidance - www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/orpts/pub1030.pdf

Enhance Support of Volunteers

The volunteer firefighters of WFD and UHFD contribute thousands of hours annually to their community. Replacing even a portion of their efforts with paid staff would force the NEJFD to increase the expense of operations. The NEJFD needs to work with both departments to continue to ensure a welcoming and supportive environment for volunteers. Ideas to be considered include:

- **Look to Increase Volunteer Base** –WFD has historically had about 75 volunteers and has been able to maintain this number without active recruiting campaigns. NEJFD and WFD should explore creating recruitment campaign to increase the number of active, trained volunteer fire by about one third to 100 volunteers. This campaign should consider focused efforts in the area near Station # 2.
- **Creation of a Length of Service Awards Program** – This program is already in place at numerous fire departments including West Webster and Penfield as well as the Penfield Ambulance. Creation of a LOSAP program involves administrative effort and increased expense for the district. There would also need to be a referendum to support the funding of the plan. Under a LOSAP, volunteers would receive a benefit after dedicating certain hours and length of time to the department. This benefit is not received until firefighters are older. Some do not consider this type of program as an incentive for younger people to volunteer.
- **Identify Incentive Programs** - Volunteer firefighters are limited in the amount and type of compensation that can be received to remain eligible for volunteer benefits in New York. This *project did not seek* to identify specific incentives that are allowable. It may be possible to identify several programs such as gift cards or other non-cash awards for meeting certain response targets or completing training requirements.
- **Reduce Nuisance Alarms** – WFD has already reduced the number and type of EMS responses that it will respond to unless specifically requested. This resulted in a reduction of responses. WFD could look at further reducing responses by working with business owners and residents to reduce the number of false alarm activations. Also, the NEJFD could work with the towns to strength the alarm ordinances to help reduce repeat false alarms.
- **Focus on Leadership Development Opportunities** – Some of the volunteers who leave emergency service organizations leave because of frustration with leadership inside the organization. It is incumbent on the NEJFD to ensure that the departments both have support to develop both the current and next generation of leaders. This involves supporting firematic training and administrative education as well as helping developing “soft skills” to foster the volunteer firefighters.

- **Continue Support of the Explorer Program** – WFD and UHFD have healthy Explorer programs to expose teenagers to the fire service and develop leadership as well. Many volunteers have joined the ranks from the departments from this program. Both departments should ensure continued financial and administrative support of this program.
- **Consider Establishing a Bunk In or Study Hall Program** – WFD has already established a successful program to staff the Enderlin Station during overnights with volunteers. UHFD has a duty night program that serves to improve the response to its district. An extension of these programs would be to encourage members to sign up during high demand hours for the department. Students could be provided with an incentive scholarship for dedicating time and meeting other requirements. Several departments in Monroe County have successful “bunk in” programs that help the departments’ increase the hours of volunteers that are available by giving housing and scholarship incentives.

Consider Establishing Key Performance Indicators to Ensure Appropriate Response

NEJFD and WFD are fiercely proud of not having paid response personnel. They are able to continue to operate in this model because they have a robust response to their emergency calls. They are one of the very few departments in suburban Monroe County that do not employ some version of paid response personnel. The commissioners and other leaders in the department believe adding paid response personnel might reduce the number of volunteers active in the department.

The NEJFD should consider establishing key performance indicators that will help them evaluate when it would be preferable to add paid staff if the response of volunteers no longer meets the community needs and expectations. Key indicators include speed of turn out time (the time from alarm to the time the apparatus are rolling), presence of adequate personnel to respond, and the response time to emergency events. The NEJFD should establish target performance measures and report them on a regular basis. If the WFD is unable to meet the targeted performance measures, the district should consider adding paid staff.

If it is decided to add paid staff, the first step would likely be adding personnel that would help maintain the stations, but would be available to respond as needed to calls. These are often referred to as laborers. Several fire districts employ personnel in this type of position. Some use full time employees and others only part time. Once four or more people are employed in this role, the district would likely have to begin using civil service titles and appointments.

Firefighters employed as laborers tend to be paid hourly, and as such their annual salaries are harder to estimate. The lowest-paid laborers in a given district varied from \$36,000 annually, or about \$18 per hour for a year with 2,000 hours, up to \$42,000 annually, or about \$21 per hour. The highest-paid laborers in a given district (presumably the most senior employees) made as little as \$44,000 annually in some districts, about \$22 per hour, and as much as \$57,000 in other districts, about \$28.50 per hour.

Among Monroe County fire departments with career firefighters, starting salaries range from about \$34,000 (Saint Paul) up to over \$46,000 (Henrietta), and average about \$40,000. After five years, career firefighters in Monroe County make over \$70,000 in each district or department with available data, ranging from about \$71,000 in Gates to \$74,000 in Brighton, for an average of \$72,000. Fringe benefits are not included and are estimated at 35 to 75 percent.

Seek to Improve Turnout Time and Response Time

As an all-volunteer department, WFD should consider the guidance of the National Fire Protection Association **Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments** (2014 Edition). This voluntary guideline document suggests the fire departments such as WFD should have a goal to respond 15 people in 9 minutes or less 90 percent of the time to perform structural firefighting. There is not a separate guidance document for combination departments and it would be reasonable for UHFD to use this document as a reference.

Both departments should identify a group of serious call types (based on dispatch) and measure their response to that subgroup of call types against the NFPA standard. Based on our evaluation, the departments could improve their "Turnout Time" and overall "Response Time." "Turnout Time" could be improved by having crews available at the station during the busiest hours of the day and also improving the speed by which the crews prepare for response on overnight events.

WFD is taking an important step in improving Response Time by creating a third station in a relatively high demand area of the district. However, WFD will need to work to have appropriate utilization of that station to shorten response times. Also, WFD should consider looking to better utilize Station 2 to shorted responses in the southern and eastern edges of the district.

Recommended Actions

The NEJFD Board of Fire Commissioners requested the CGR recommend the most desirable options based on a set of criteria established by the Board. The full document is included as an appendix to the report but the criteria are outlined below.

NEJFD Criteria for Recommended Actions

- The Board of Fire Commissioners requests that the CGR study concentrate on the North East Joint Fire District's current borders and should not consider expanding or reducing said established District borders.
- The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to establish District wide standardization, including but not limited to:
 - Volunteer Firefighting Personnel
 - Command Structure
 - Response Operations
 - Equipment (Apparatus and Small Equipment)
- The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to improve/maintain the overall volunteer response District wide. (Not to be supplemented by paid firefighting staff)
- The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to provide the highest level of volunteer emergency services at the most reasonable costs. To achieve this goal the BOFC seeks to streamline its operations to a District wide model, eliminate the duplication of services and take advantage of economy of scale.
- The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to have the Union Hill Volunteer Fireman's Association be an integral part of the anticipated transition process.

Recommended Actions

Based on the above criteria and the identified options for the district, CGR recommends the following actions to be considered by the NEJFD.

- **Transition to a One District, One Department Model-** This recommendation is based on the potential to substantially reduce costs for the fire district with little to no impact on service to its residents. This is not an easy action to recommend as it will have a significant negative impact to another organization with which there is

a long relationship. If the Board chooses this action, below are some of the items that they should consider:

- Establish a transition committee that has representation from all involved parties,
- Establish a course of action that will encourage the UHFD firefighters that live in or near the district to join WFD,
- Work with UHFD to manage the financial and organization transition that will come with the loss of the contract,
- Evaluate if using either or both UHFD fire stations under contract to respond to calls district wide might benefit residents, and
- Communicate clearly with residents and elected officials the course of action and supporting rationale. It will be particularly important to work with the Town of Ontario to ensure appropriate fire protection to all areas of its town.

Although with diligent action by NEJFD, WFD, and UHFD it may be possible to enact this recommendation on or before the end of 2016, it might be necessary to extend the timeline to appropriately address all details related to this transition.

- **Enhance the Support of Volunteers-** This recommendation includes seven separate actions (previously described) that should be considered by a committee(s) of the NEJFD and WFD. The District is clearly committed to a volunteer workforce and has provided top notch fire stations and equipment for the members to use. The NEJFD and WFD should work together to evaluate which of the separate actions (or other actions) will have the most substantial positive impact on the operation.
- **Seek to Improve Turnout Time and Response Time –** This recommendation is particularly important for events that need a prompt response such as reported fires and serious accidents. NEJFD and WFD should establish a list of high priority events (based on dispatch information and actual condition found) and goals for response to those events based on NFPA 1720. The WFD performance should be measured and analyzed to improve future responses. Potential areas identified in the report are a low number of qualified drivers and traffic flow problems at certain times of day.
- **Establish Key Performance Indicators –** This recommendation is tied to the preceding suggestion, but focuses on identifying if the existing volunteer response is no longer sufficient to meet the community needs and expectations or the established standards. NEJFD and WFD have clearly stated that they would like to remain exclusively volunteer responders, but the national trend for communities of

this size is that paid staff is sometimes needed to meet response needs. The NEJFD should evaluate objective data on a regular basis to gauge if supplementing volunteers with a paid workforce might be needed.

- **Consider Efficiency and Collaboration Opportunities** - The NEJFD should actively seek out further opportunities to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Options include expanding use of group purchasing, sharing services with other municipalities and districts, and enhancing interagency planning and communication. There is the potential for property tax rebates from NYS for qualified efficiency plans with other governments.

Appendix: NEJFD Recommendation Criteria

The following document was adopted by the NEJFD Board of Commissioners to guide CGR in evaluating options to make recommendations consistent with the goals of the district.

North East Joint Fire District 2015 CGR Study Criteria

The overall mission of the North East Joint Fire District is to provide the highest quality volunteer emergency services to our District at the most reasonable costs to our taxpayers. The Board of Fire Commissioners requests the Center for Governmental Research to outline the best course of action for the District to follow in order to achieve this mission. The BOFC provides the below criteria to the CGR for the purposes of providing the requested best course of action. The Board requests that this best option be included as a best option summary at the end of the CGR study report.

1. The Board of Fire Commissioners requests that the CGR study concentrate on the North East Joint Fire District's current borders and should not consider expanding or reducing said established District borders.
2. The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to establish District wide standardization, including but not limited to:
 - a. Volunteer Firefighting Personnel
 - b. Command Structure
 - c. Response Operations
 - d. Equipment (Apparatus and Small Equipment)
3. The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to improve/maintain the overall volunteer response District wide. (Not to be supplemented by paid firefighting staff)

4. The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to provide the highest level of volunteer emergency services at the most reasonable costs. To achieve this goal the BOFC seeks to streamline its operations to a District wide model, eliminate the duplication of services and take advantage of economy of scale.

5. The Board of Fire Commissioners seeks to have the Union Hill Volunteer Fireman's Association be an integral part of the anticipated transition process.

By Order of the Board of Fire Commissioners

May 14, 2015