



Town of Hatfield Fire Department

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Chief Robert Flaherty



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With the override, the fire department will be able to continue to provide a level service from FY23 with some increases in building maintenance to include air filters in the apparatus bays to help with the diesel exhaust, increases in equipment maintenance service contracts for apparatus and breathing air systems. There are increases in our fire/EMS reporting software, custodial supplies, and postage. Upon review of the fire budget and some adjustments within other lines, the above increases only increased the overall fire budget by \$120.

The ambulance would be able to continue to operate a staffed station with two Firefighter/Paramedic/EMT's 16 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with those working holidays being paid time and a half and those working over 40 hours being paid overtime as required by law. This is consistent with the FY23 staffing model. Even with the override, there will be no funds to send full-time staff to the fire academy for training and no pay increases to make Hatfield competitive for hiring. We would continue with a paid overnight on call program as we have had for over a decade, albeit not every night will be covered as we don't have enough in town call EMT's to cover all shifts as this is voluntary to sign up. There are increases in the operations side of the ambulance as service contracts for preventive maintenance have increased and we have new equipment. With more calls being covered, there are higher billing costs but more revenue as well. With additional staffing, there is a need for scheduling software that also has assets and certification tracking for members. We will be looking at other platforms to consolidate scheduling, reporting, fire prevention and incident notification as we currently have three systems in place.

Should the override fail, we will not be able to replace the air filters in the apparatus bays which aid in cancer prevention and prevent soot from settling on our turnout gear in the lockers. North station on Depot Rd will be closed with engine 2 moving to center station requiring a COA van to be moved to another location, possibly outside as our cabinets do not lock and need heat to prevent freezing. Residents in North Hatfield would see a small increase in their fire insurance as well. There would be virtually no professional development for members, and we would not be able to hire more than 2 personnel per FY due to new employees' physical costs. We would have a limited Fire Prevention program for residents, less custodial supplies, and educational supplies. There would be limited to no Hampshire County/Western MA Chiefs meetings, no travel outside of Western MA for classes and no funds to send full-time staff to the fire academy.

The largest loss for emergency services should the override fail will be staffing. Hatfield ambulance will be generally staffed 8 hours a day, 5 days a week with the Fire Chief/Paramedic and one full-time firefighter/EMT-B. As stated above, there are not enough call EMT's in town to respond after regular business hours. It is likely that Hatfield ambulance will not be able to respond for the remaining 16 hours a day of a 24-hour period, relying on mutual aid. This will cause a delay in response times and residents receiving medical care. This is a quick synopsis of the changes that will happen with or without the override passing at town meeting and town election.