



# Amherst NH Town Government



## Amherst Fire Rescue

### Strategic Plan Update for FY23-24

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October 11, 2022



# Mission Statement

- Amherst Fire Rescue is a community all-hazard emergency services organization comprised of members dedicated to the health and well-being of its citizens by providing high quality, prompt, skillful, caring and professional emergency response, prevention education, life safety code enforcement and community support services.





# Vision Statement

- It is the vision of Amherst Fire Rescue to be recognized as an all-hazards, all-risk service provider by developing and maintaining strategic community partnerships, hiring and training exceptional people, developing efficiencies in service provision to ensure sustainability for the entire organization and maintaining our core infrastructure.



# Philosophy



**EXCELLENCE**  
**IS MY**  
**RESPONSIBILITY**

- DO YOUR JOB
- TREAT PEOPLE RIGHT
- HAVE AN ALL IN ATTITUDE
- GIVE ALL OUT EFFORT





# What *AFR* Does for the Community.....

## ☐ Amherst Fire Rescue Provides:

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire suppression
- All hazards mitigation
- Fire prevention, code enforcement and inspections
- Community public education
- Emergency management





# Department Overview

## ☐ Rescue/EMS:

- 34 per diem members:

8 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's)

14 Advanced EMT's

12 Paramedics

21 members have fire certifications

## ■ Vehicles:

- Two Type I Ambulances with 4-wheel drive (2011, 2016)
- One Ford Explorer SUV with 4-wheel drive (2017)





# Department Overview (cont.)

- Fire Services:

-  3 career members

-  22 have EMS Certification

-  33 call members

-  Vehicles

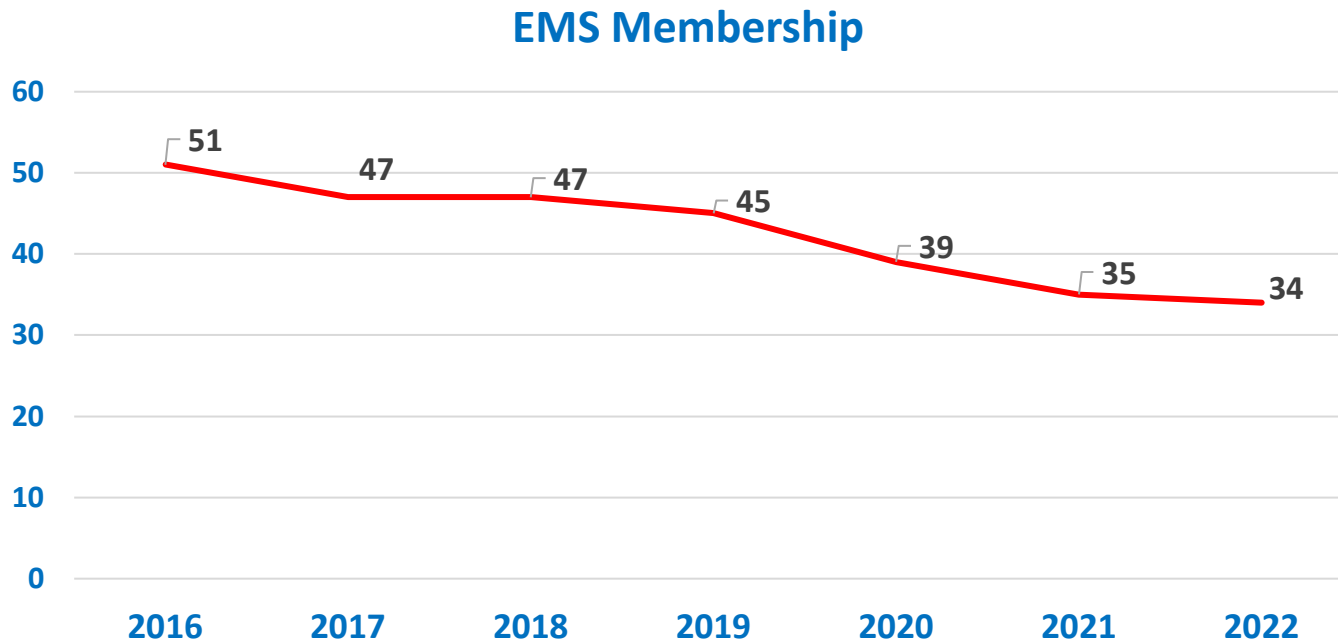
- Four Class A Pumpers (1991, 2003, 2015, 2022)
- One Tower Ladder (1997)
- One Tanker (3000 gallons) (2007)
- One Forestry Tanker (all wheel drive) (2002)
- One Forestry (4-wheel drive pick-up) (2006)
- One Ford Pick-up with 4-wheel drive (command) (2008)
- One Chevrolet SUV with 4-wheel drive (command) (2020)



# Membership History

## ☐ Rescue (EMS) Membership trends:

- Supply of per diem professionals proves to be limited

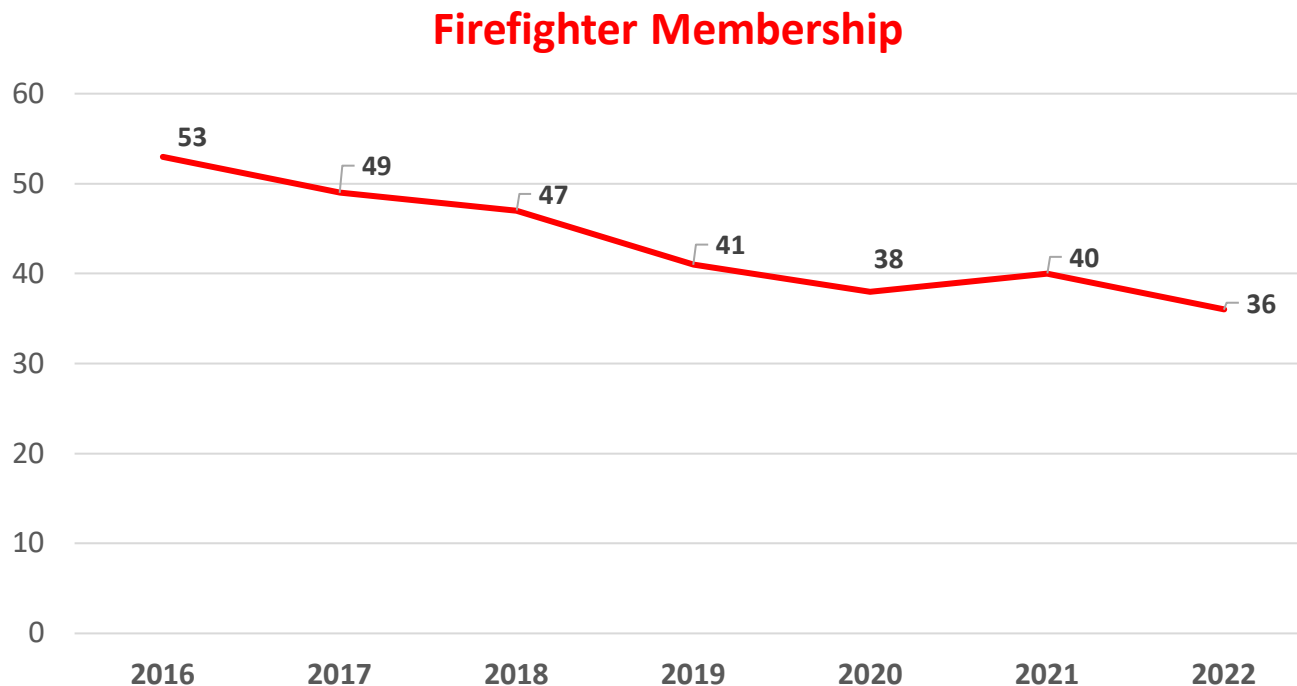




# Membership History (cont.)

## ☐ Fire membership trends:

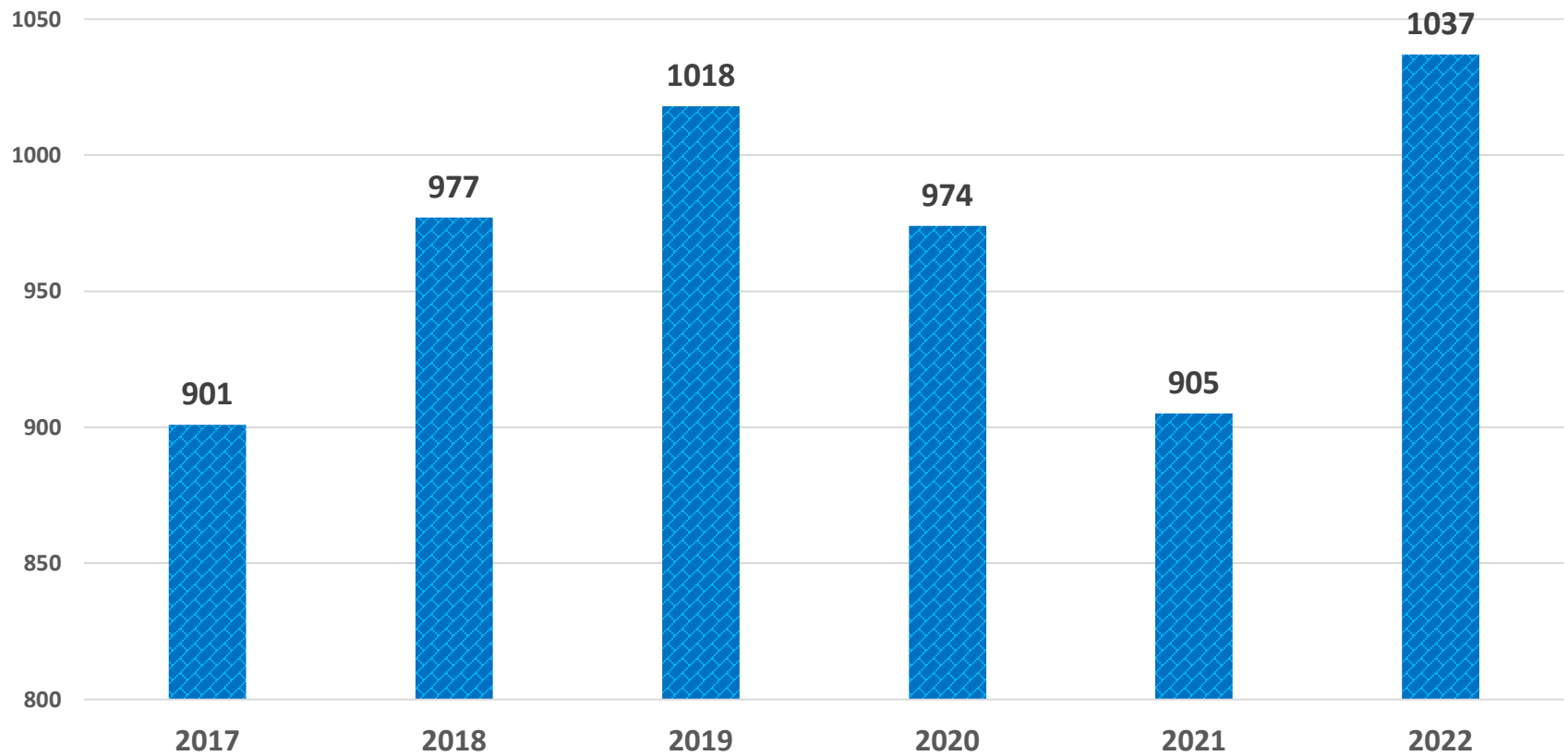
- Call department memberships struggle nationally





# Historical Rescue Facts

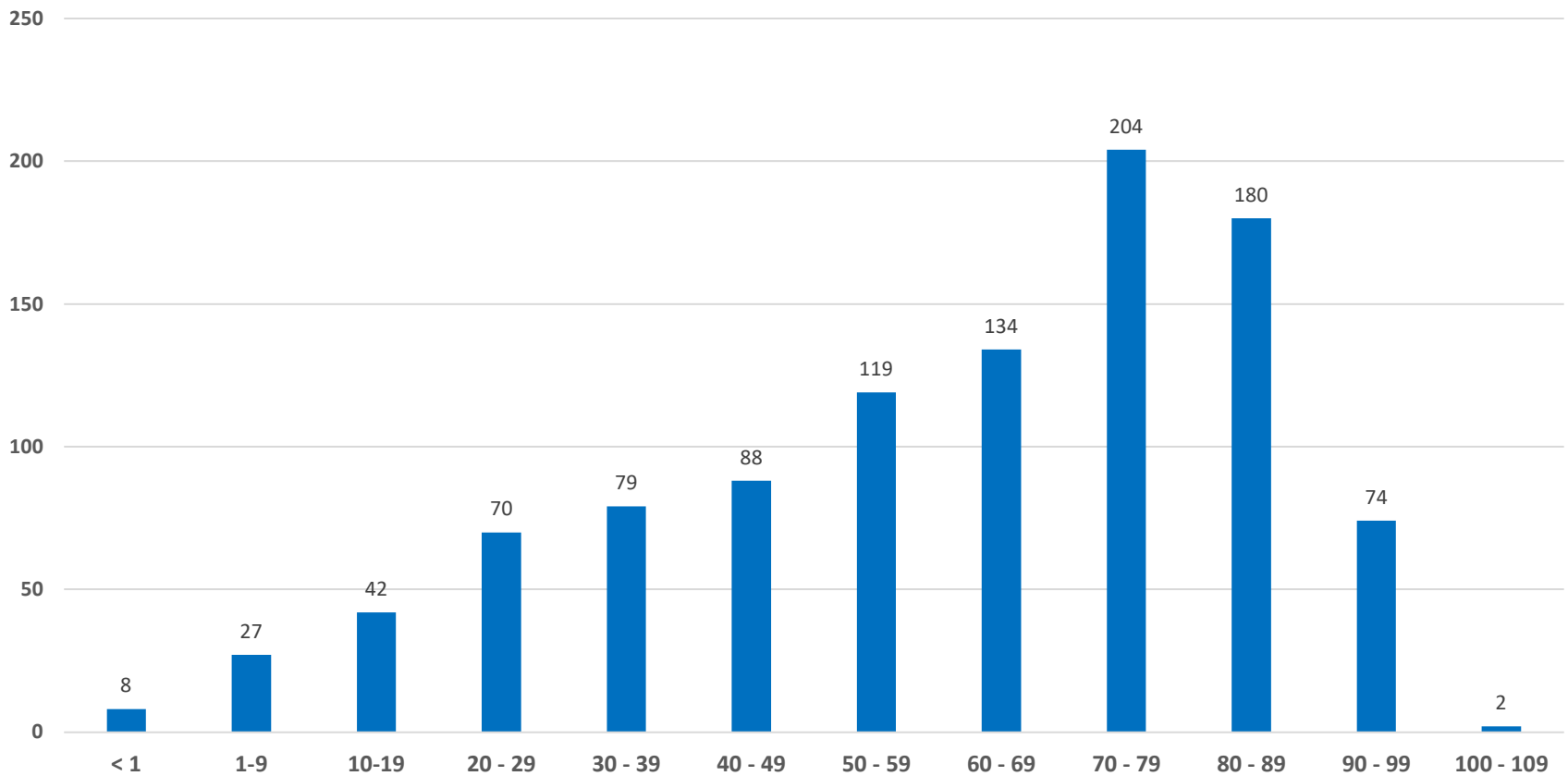
## EMS Calls





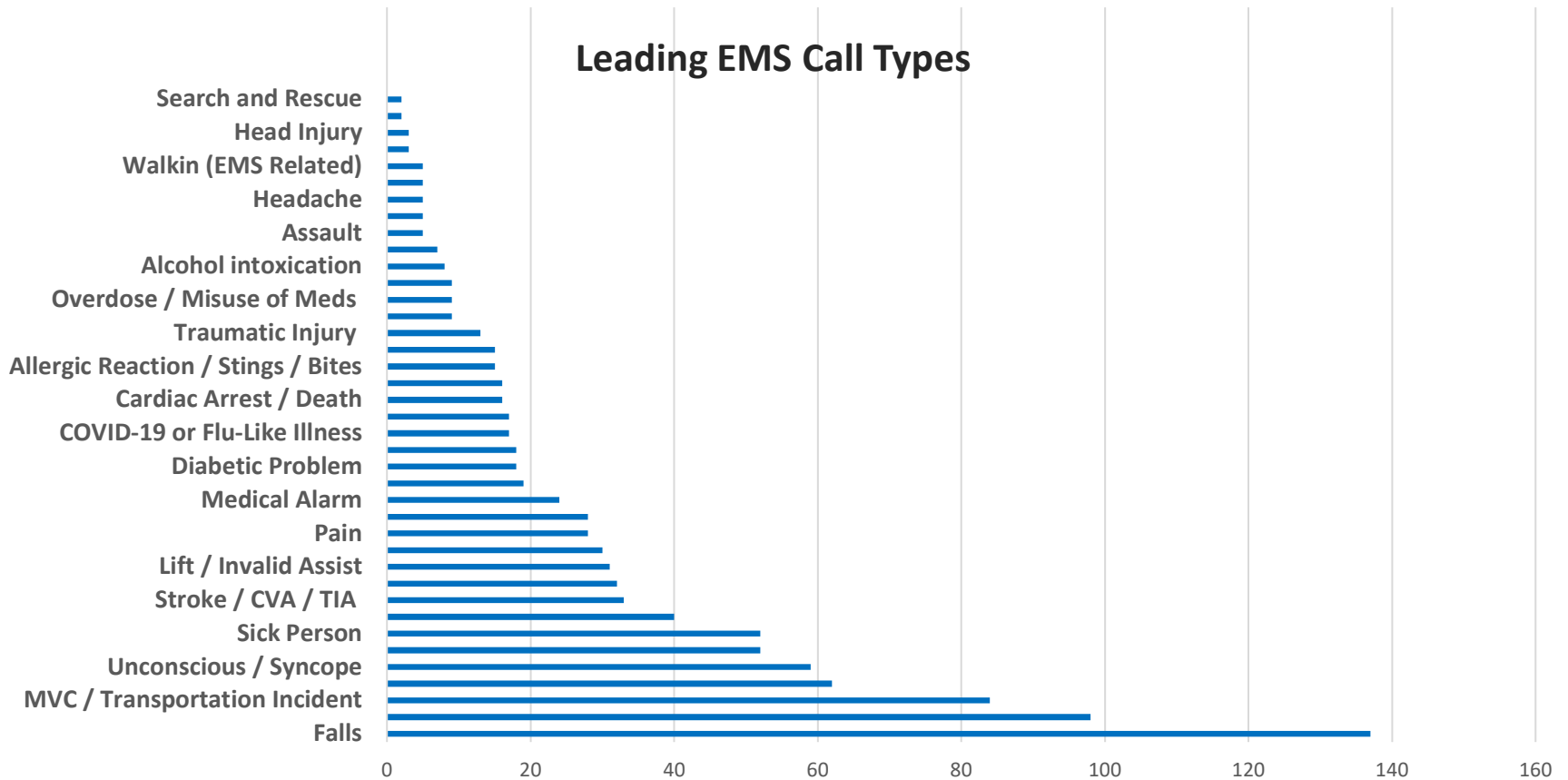
# Historical Rescue Facts (cont.)

## EMS Calls by Age



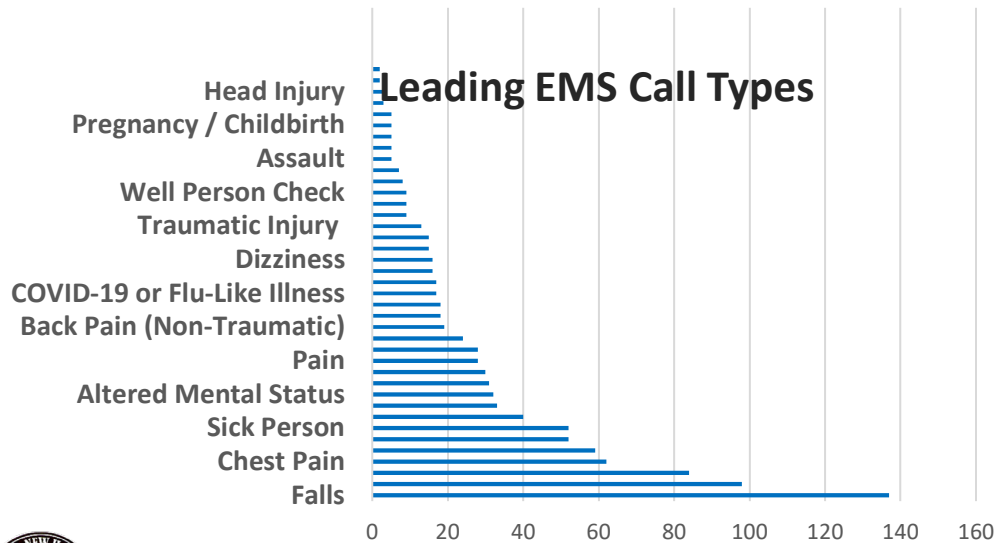
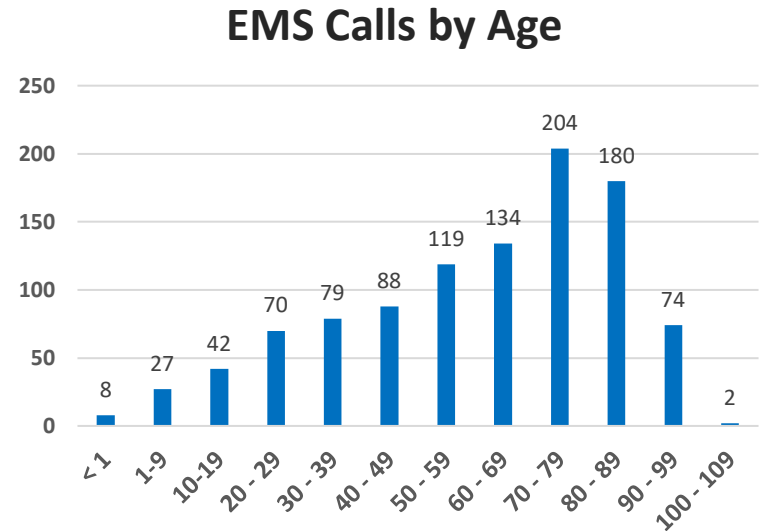
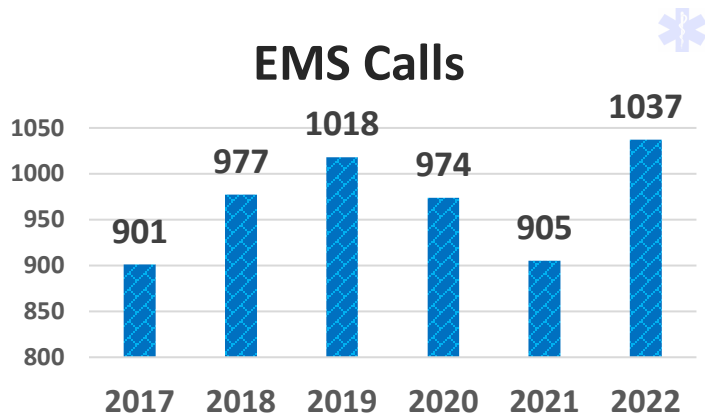


# Historical Rescue Facts (cont.)





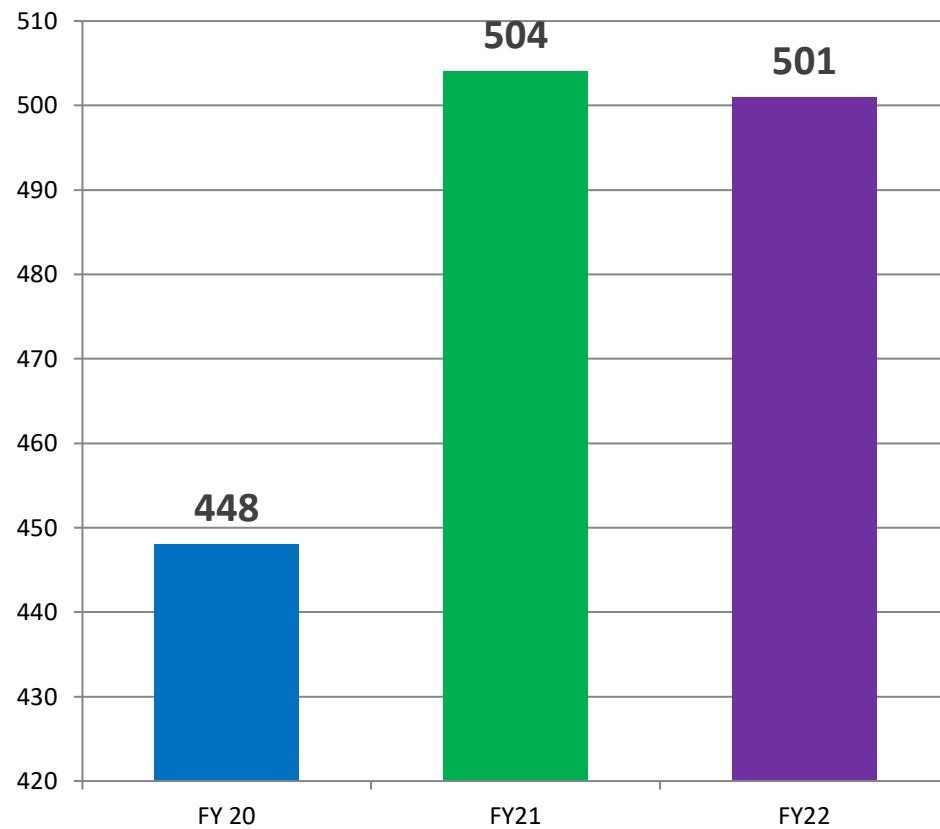
# Historical Dashboard





# Historical Fire facts

- Fire Calls





# Historical Fire Facts (cont.)

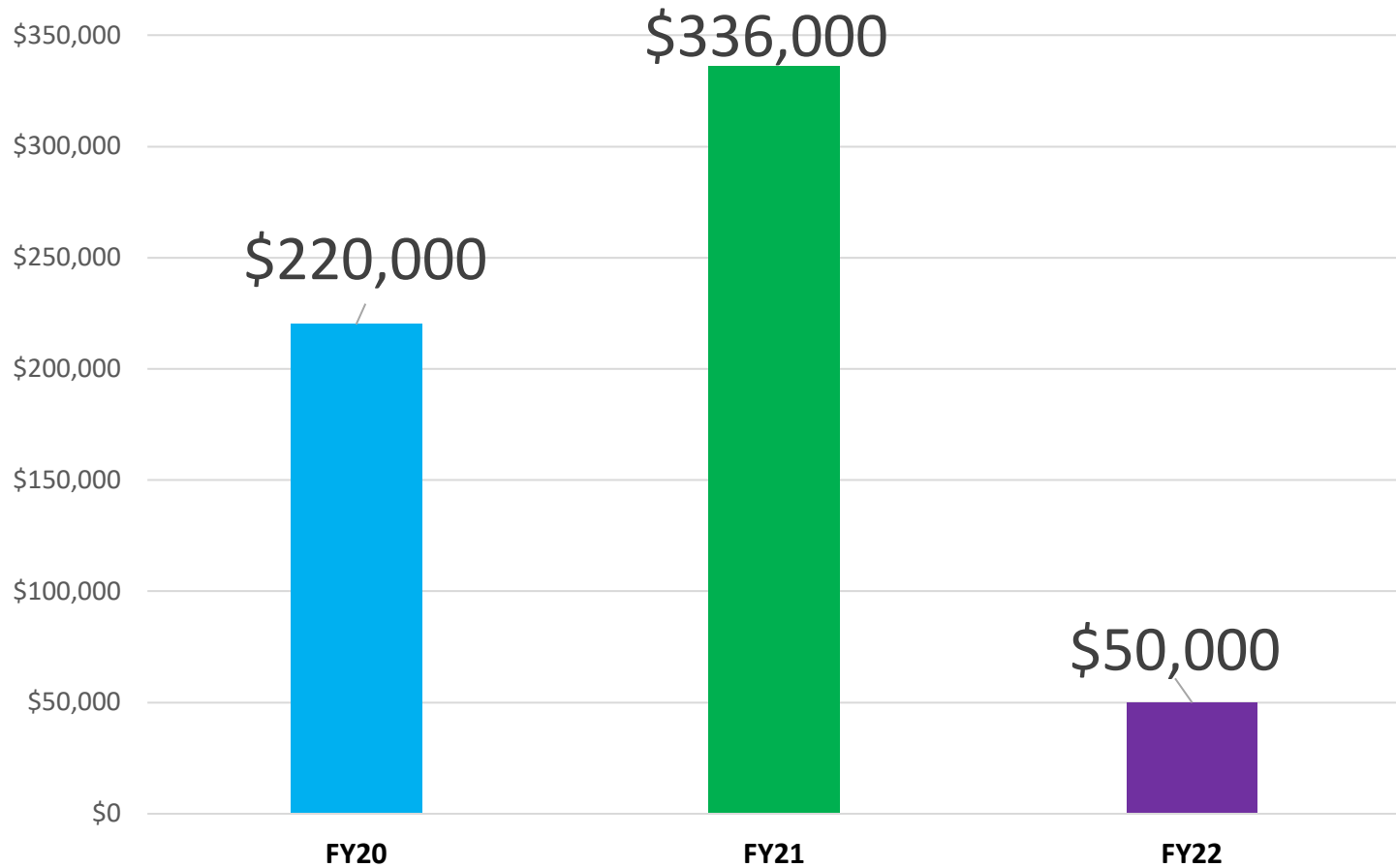
- Fire Call Types and Frequency





# Historical Fire Facts (cont.)

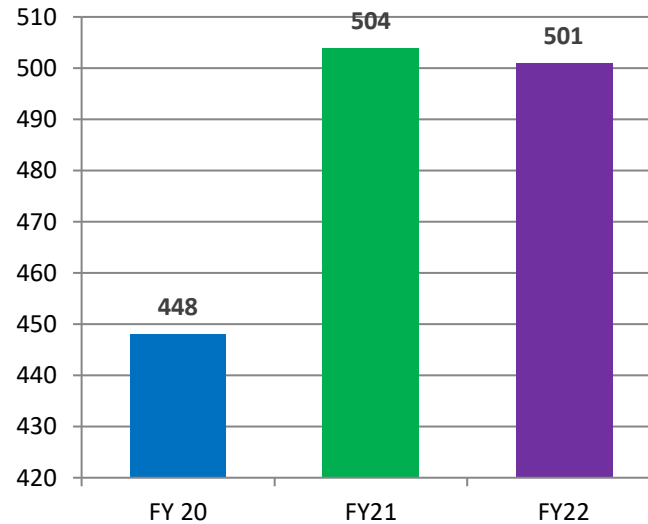
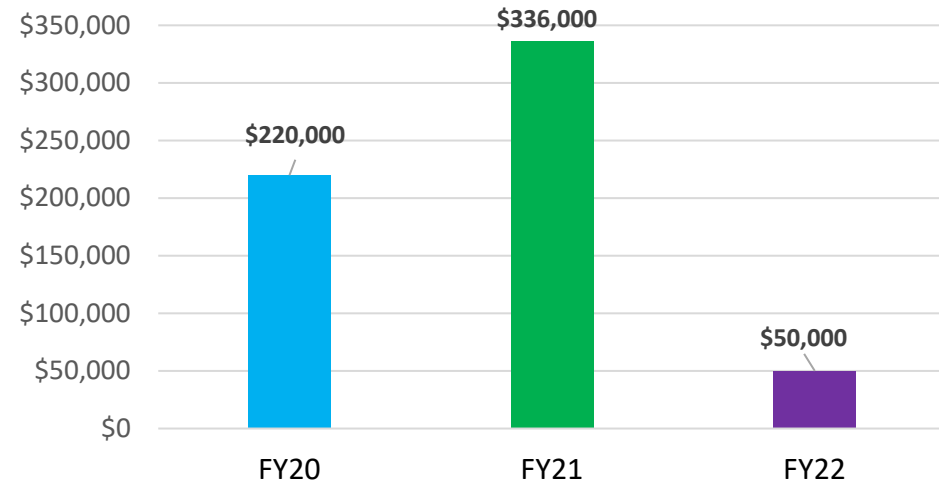
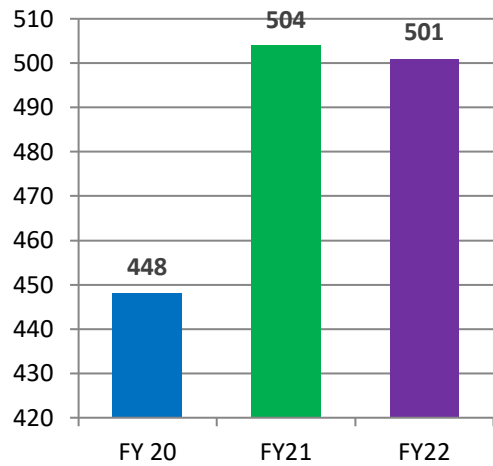
## Property Loss







# Historical Dashboard





# Fire Prevention

## ☐ Code Enforcement:

- ❖ Building Plan review

- ❖ Site Plan review

- ❖ Inspections

- ❖ Project Consultation

- ❖ Technical Advisory

- ❖ Interagency facilitation

## ☐ Educating the community:

- ❖ Contact during call responses

- ❖ Inspections

- ❖ Fire Drills

- ❖ Fire/Safety interactive lessons in schools

- ❖ Public safety discussions

- ❖ Station tours





# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- ❖ Diverse work force with well-rounded skills and backgrounds
- ❖ Excellent working relationship with neighboring communities
- ❖ Provide service for an extremely low cost
- ❖ Fire prevention

## Weaknesses

- ❖ Average age of our apparatus
- ❖ Potential of increased response times
- ❖ On the low end of staffing for size of town, call volume, hazard load
- ❖ Resource limitations





# Opportunities

- ❖ Grant funding
  - Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER)
  - Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG)
- ❖ Pursuit of missed cost recovery opportunities

# Threats

- ❖ Failing to provide an adequate response.
- ❖ Losing public trust and respect by not meeting expectations
- ❖ Injury or loss of a firefighter due to inadequate staffing or equipment failure





# Opportunities

- ❖ Educating town leadership and community of department needs & shortfalls
- ❖ Improved productivity through increased staffing

# Threats

- ❖ Injury or loss of a civilian life due to increased response times, short staffing or equipment failure
- ❖ Catastrophic failures of vehicles/apparatus





# Goals & Initiatives

## □ Goal #1

### ❖ Continuously monitor adequacy of department resources

- Current staffing model creates holes at times for operational needs

#### ❖ Per diem staffing limitations

- Compensation on the lower end of average; time/credential-based pay matrix
- Limited ability to fill vacancies

#### ❖ Call member response difficulties

- Limited availability

#### ❖ Inadequate administrative assistance

- Fire Prevention
- Administration (department head)





# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## ☐ Initiatives for goal #1

### ❖ Encourage time & credential pay scale (matrix)

- Competitive with market
- Rewards longevity in field and AFR
- Attracts higher caliber professionals

### ❖ Encourage federal grant opportunities for staffing

- SAFER funding for deferred cost of additional coverage
  - All personnel expenses paid by federal dollars for multiple years

### ❖ Supplement per diem coverage with full time

- Shift officer & EMT – permanent members assigned to shift
- Greater guarantee to fill daily vacancies as they arise
- Continued dependence on per diem with cushion of full-time personnel who can be mandated into open shifts





# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Initiatives for goal #1

- ❖ Continue call member recruitment
- ❖ Additional (4<sup>th</sup>) provider on duty will contribute to better staffing for incident response (recommendation of career)
  - Career shift officer to fill gaps in officer coverage
- ❖ Increase shared use of Community Development (CD) specialist to assist Amherst Fire Rescue
  - Increased Fire Prevention efficiency with CD in-house managing calls/scheduling
  - Payroll, phones, written/electronic communications, etc
  - Improved focus on specific items currently competing for attention







# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Goal #2

- ❖ Plug financial holes and pursue cost recovery

## □ Initiatives for goal #2

- ❖ Encourage self-funding solutions to for protection shortages

- 4<sup>th</sup> provider daily (FF/EMT) to assist with annual inspections and cross use for emergency calls
  - ❖ Added safety from touring occupancies annually
    - Ability to manage correctable hazards prior to emergency response
  - ❖ Additional public interaction
  - ❖ Cost recovery opportunity through inspection fees



# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Initiatives for goal #2

❖ Introducing permanent coverage into system....

	FF/Paramedic	Lt/AEMT
Salary, benefits (1)	\$90,000	\$100,000
Shifts (4)	\$360,000	\$400,000
Budgeted part time wages	(\$206,911)	\$0
<b>Additional annual cost</b>	<b>\$153,089</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

❖ How 24-hour coverage

	Shift 1	Shift 2	Shift 3	Shift 4
<b>Career</b>	Lt/Paramedic	Lt/AEMT	Lt/Paramedic	Lt/AEMT
<b>Career</b>	FF/AEMT	FF/Paramedic	FF/AEMT	FF/Paramedic
<b>Per diem</b>	FF/EMT	FF/EMT	FF/EMT	FF/EMT
<b>Per diem</b>	EMT	EMT	EMT	EMT





# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Initiatives for goal #2

- ❖ Revision of mechanical permit fee schedule
  - ❖ On the low end for cost-efficiency
  - ❖ Cost recovery opportunity
    - ❖ Fire prevention revenue to increase when using competitive rates
  
- ❖ Encourage a Revolving Fund to incorporate EMS transport revenue, Mont Vernon contract fees, and detail fees received





# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Initiatives for goal #2

❖ Encouraging implementation of written EMS contract with Mont Vernon

- Question of contract language currently outlining commitments of Amherst or Mont Vernon

❖ Cost recovery opportunity

- Capital reserve fund supplement
- Operational costs shared proportionately

❖ *Advancement of Intermunicipal agreement process*





# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Goal #3

- ❖ Decrease fleet vulnerability

## □ Initiatives for goal #3

- ❖ Evaluate replacement schedule based on extended lead times for vehicles and equipment
  - Adhere to industry recommendations and lead times on capital replacement



# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)



# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Anticipated vehicle replacement costs (from

Vehicle/Equipment	Type	Model Year	Useful Life	Replacement Cost	Rep Year (FY)	Capital Reserve Additions	Capital Reserve Balance
					2022		\$1,252,409
Ambulance 2	Ambulance	2011	10	\$220,000	2023	\$257,000	\$1,032,409
Forestry 2	Pickup	2006	15	\$55,000	2023		\$977,409
Engine 5	Class A Pump	1991	25	\$575,000	2023		\$402,409
Car 2	SUV/Command	2009	12	\$45,000	2023	\$257,000	\$614,409
Forestry 1	Forestry	1982			2024	\$257,000	\$871,409
					2025	\$257,000	\$1,128,409
Car 3	Passenger Car	2016	10	\$0	2026	\$257,000	\$1,385,409
Lucas Device	Auto CPR	2016	10	\$19,600	2026		\$1,365,809
Tower 1	Tower/Ladder	1997	30	\$1,000,000	2027	\$257,000	\$622,809
Ambulance 1	Ambulance	2016	10	\$235,000	2027		\$387,809
Engine 3	Class A Pump	2003	25	\$605,000	2028	\$257,000	\$39,809
Washer Extractor	Gear Washer	2003	25	\$12,000	2028		\$27,809
Car 4	Paramedic SUV	2016	12	\$45,000	2029	\$257,000	\$239,809
Cardiac Monitors	Defibrillators	2019	10	\$31,100	2029		\$208,709
SCBA Fill Station	Air Compressor	2004	25		2029		\$208,709
Dryer	Gear Dryer	2019	10	\$8,100	2029		\$200,609
					2030	\$257,000	\$457,609
Car 1	SUV/Command	2019	12	\$55,000	2031	\$257,000	\$659,609
Tanker 1	Tanker	2007	25	\$500,000	2032	\$257,000	\$416,609



# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

COVID's lasting effects on emergency services....







# Goals & Initiatives (cont.)

## □ Goal #4

- ❖ Working through & beyond COVID-19

## □ Initiative for Goal #4

- ❖ Manage obvious burnout affecting all professions

- Global shift in willingness to remain in healthcare
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements
- Delays of patient transfer at overflowing hospitals

- ❖ Call volume fluctuations

- Increase/decrease based on all variables/unknowns
- Consistently inconsistent





# Intermunicipal Agreement

- ❖ Contract EMS coverage with neighboring community
- ❖ Shared cost for the use of resources
- ❖ Efficient use of municipal resources in cost recovery
- ❖ Opportunities to grow departments through added revenue and better utilization of personnel/equipment
- ❖ Concept is utilized by many municipalities across state
  - Generally calculated by percentage of call volume (actual calls)
  - Sometimes calculated by percentage of population (potential calls)
  - Commonality of being a cost sharing venture
    - ❖ Percentage (%) of department operating budget





# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

## Mont Vernon:

- ❖ 100-120 calls per year
- ❖ 10-12% of Amherst Fire Rescue call volume (EMS)
- ❖ Consumes any necessary personnel for EMS calls
  - First (A1) calls – use of daily EMS staffing (3)
  - Second (A2) calls – use of remaining EMS staff, Admin, call force
  - Use of all AFR transport vehicles in honoring commitment
- ❖ \$17,000 current annual payment for Amherst availability
  - \$46.57 per day
  - Disproportionate to cost & consumption of resources

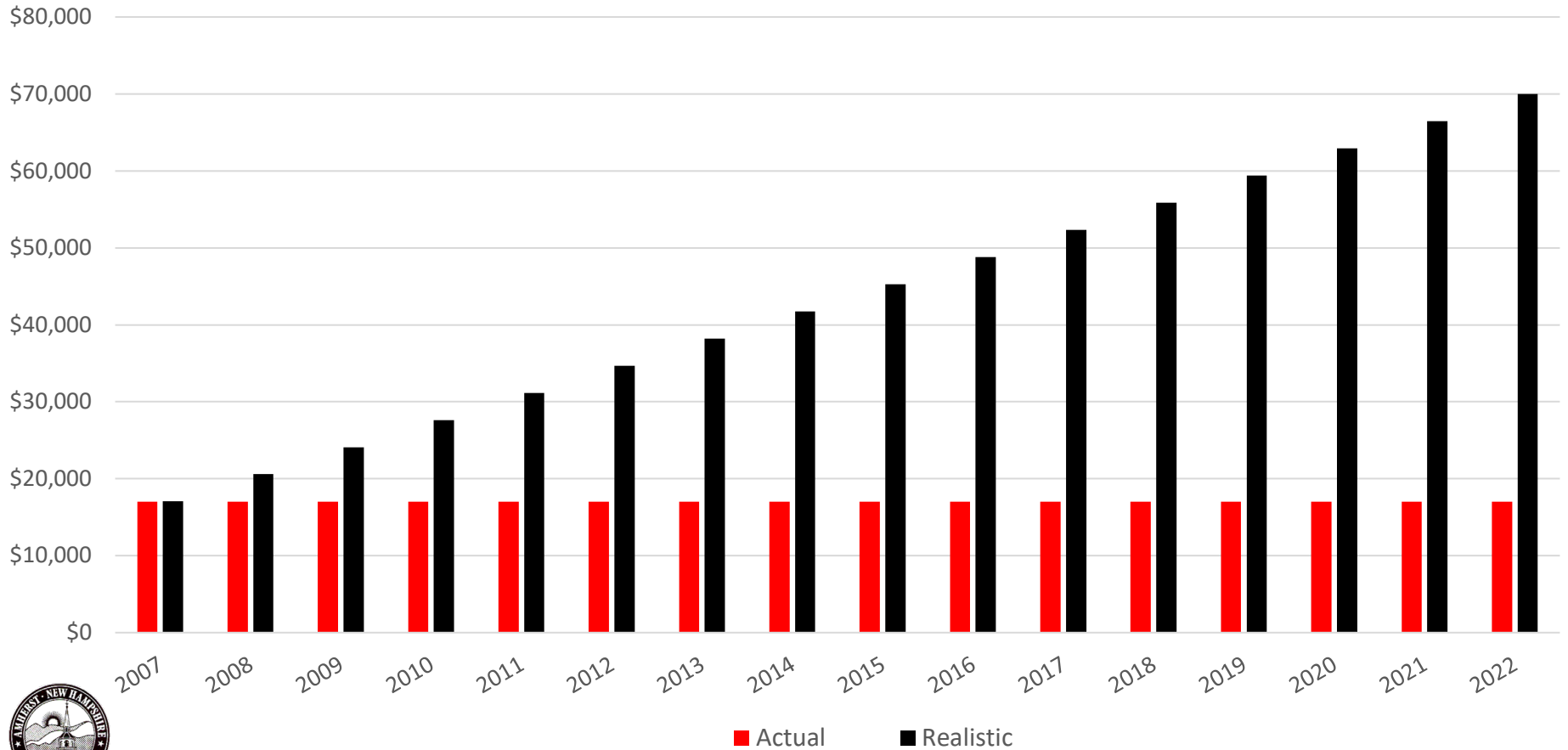




# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

- **Amherst / Mont Vernon**

Actual vs Realistic

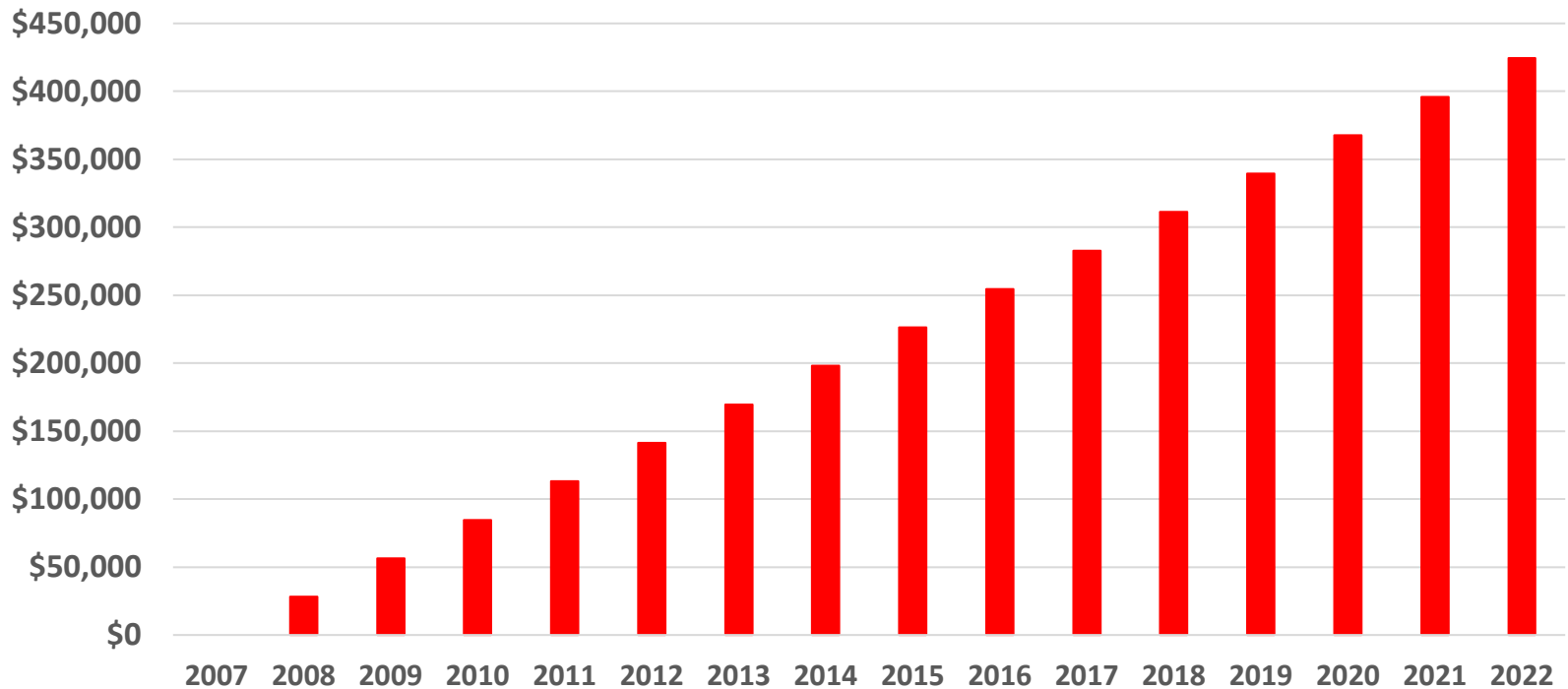




# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

- Amherst / Mont Vernon

## Cumulative Revenue Potential





# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

## ❖ Increased Revenue utilization

### ❖ Supplement to capital reserve fund

- Offset capital purchases
- Shared financial responsibility for Amherst capital

### ❖ Personnel coverage

- Existing personnel
- Additional personnel

### ❖ Offset to equipment depreciation





# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

## ❖ Recommendation:

- Address inadequate contract fee with Mont Vernon
- Pursue appropriate contract agreement
  - ❖ Calculation based on call percentage as directly linked to AFR operational cost percentage
    - ❖ **\$70,000** annual contract fee, evaluated every 3 years
      - Significant savings to Mont Vernon over a population-based contract (2,793 or 19.5% of total population served)
      - Consistency with statewide trends
      - Appropriate fee for operational readiness



# Intermunicipal Agreement (cont.)

## Franklin:

- Coverage to Andover
- *Percentage of calls*
  
- Breakdown:
- 130 calls per year
- 6.8% of call volume in Andover
- \$80,000 or 6.8% of EMS budget

## Wilton:

- Coverage to Lyndeborough, Greenfield
- *Percentage of calls*
  
- Breakdown:
- Wilton \$231,000 (56%, 275 calls)
- Greenfield \$103,000 (25%, 125 calls)
- Lyndeborough \$75,000 (18%, 90 calls)

## Hopkinton:

- Coverage to Warner & Webster
- *Percentage of actual EMS costs (payroll, ambulances, supplies, equipment) over 3 years shared by percentage of use*
  
- Breakdown:
- Webster 10%
- Warner 33%
- Hopkinton 57%







- Amherst

**DRAFT**

*Proposed  
contract  
available  
in its  
entirety*

**AMBULANCE SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE  
TOWN OF AMHERST, NH  
AND THE  
TOWN OF MONT VERNON, NH**

This AGREEMENT shall be effective on the **1<sup>st</sup>** day of **January, 2023** by and between the Town of Amherst, NH and the Town of Mont Vernon, NH. This 3-year AGREEMENT shall remain in effect until **December 31, 2025** at midnight.

**(Section 1.0) Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this agreement is for the Town of Amherst, NH to provide emergency medical services to the Town of Mont Vernon, NH.

**Content and Responsibilities**

**(Section 2.0) Responsibilities of the Town of Amherst**

- 2.1 The Town of Amherst shall operate an ambulance service, under the direction of Amherst Fire Rescue, on behalf of the Town of Mont Vernon. The service shall be licensed by the State of New Hampshire, Department of Safety and Bureau of EMS. The ambulance shall respond to emergencies in accordance with section five (5.0) of this agreement.





# AFR Strategic Plan

## Discussion

