
Gibsonville Fire Department



Strategic Plan



2023-2028

Introduction

The Gibsonville Fire Department developed a Strategic Plan providing a roadmap for improving the department based on public expectations and member needs. Facilitating a clear direction of growth, goals and objectives are defined, and a timeline of implementation is set. The plan focuses on staffing, response preparedness, and equipment, each representing a foremost concern for stakeholders. The plan's completion time covers a five-year span, and adjustments will be made according to plan progress and ever-changing need.

Protecting Gibsonville from the devastating consequences of an uncontrolled fire defines the inception of the Gibsonville Fire Department. Putting out fires is no longer the sole purpose of many fire departments in North Carolina. Departments developed into agencies that provide a multitude of services. Public service is an expectation of both our governing town and the residents we serve. Calls for emergency medical service are our highest run response area. The increase has changed qualifications from basic firefighting skills to an additional need for trained emergency medical technicians. This is one of the many adjustments made over the past years. Our mission, continually striving for excellence within our field by leading the community in risk reduction and maintaining a constant state of preparedness, is one that we live by. We are dedicated to the process of staying at the forefront of progress and striving to anticipate and meet future needs.



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Brief History

The Gibsonville Fire Department was organized by volunteers in early December of 1923. It was accepted as a North Carolina State Fireman's Association member on December 8, 1923. Equipment, at that time consisted of five fire hose reels with 200 to 300 feet of 2 ½" fire hose on each. These reels were located in small tin buildings near densely populated areas. The first fire alarm was a siren capable of being heard anywhere in the city limits. It was situated atop four light poles. During these early years' firefighters would rush, by car or on foot, to the closest hose reel, grab the hose from the reel and run as fast as they could to the scene.

The department has grown from these humble beginnings into a combination department, consisting of both career and volunteers, responding to over a hundred fire and medical calls a month. The ability to cover the ever-growing response needs is possible because of our committed members. While, the department has transformed into a combination department, we will never forget the past, present, and future volunteers and their important impact on our community.



Mission

A mission statement is used to define who we are and what our organization is going to do. Developing a mission statement explains who we are, why we are here, what we intend to do, why we do it, and for whom we exist.

Past Statement

The mission of the Gibsonville Fire Department is to protect lives, property, and the community from the destructive effects of fire, disaster, and other life hazards by providing emergency response services and public education to the citizens of Gibsonville and other mutual-aid entities.

Current Statement

The Gibsonville Fire Department continuously strives for excellence within our field to ensure we lead the community in risk reduction and maintain a constant state of preparedness.



Vision

A vision statement is used to provide a glimpse into what the department wants to move toward in the future. It supports the mission and gives further direction on what we intend to accomplish. The mission may never change, but the vision grows and is adaptable as current needs and best practices evolve.

Vision Statement

To be at the forefront of progress by staying well-informed and well-trained on best practices for our community based on current needs and future change.



Core Values

Setting values for the department provides a standard for a culture that positively supports the community. The combination of our mission and values form the footprint that the department is built on and, without any other guiding information, promotes success and accountability. These values represent the fundamental commitments and beliefs guiding the individuals and team on how we serve the community.

1

Integrity

Always do what is right with honesty as our foundation.

2

Dedicated Professionalism

Personal commitment to exceed expectations and perform with utmost courage, integrity, and pride.

3

Community Stewardship

Internalizing our trust for our community's safety and well-being.

4

Service Before Self

Recognizing and placing the needs of others before our own.

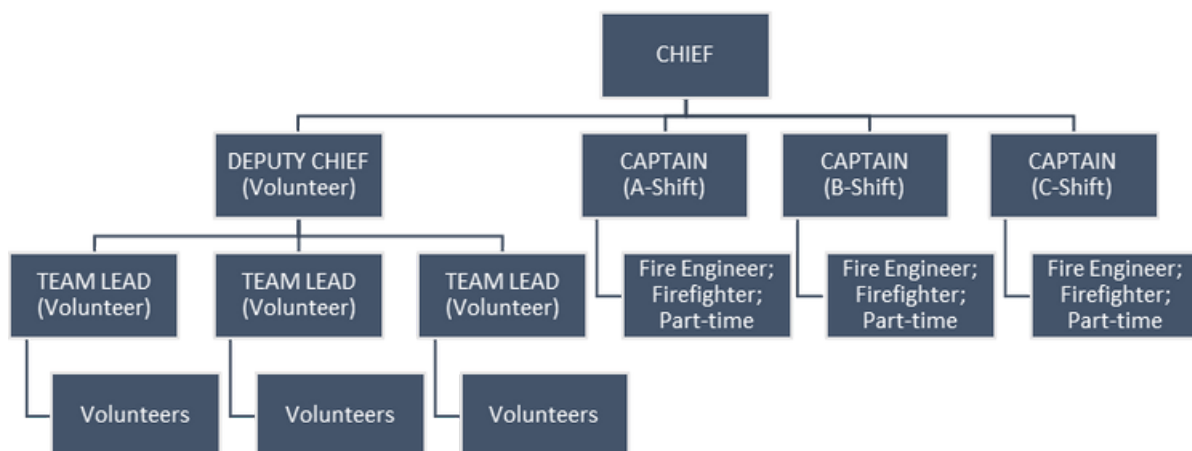
5

Individual Driven Teamwork

Promoting personal accountability for our success through empowered partnerships.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure represents the hierarchy of staffing. As a combination department, we have worked to blend the volunteer and paid staff. All ranking members within the chain of command meet minimum qualification standards; officer qualification standards are equal for volunteer and paid staff. The chief is in charge of the department, with the deputy chief (volunteer) serving the volunteer staff. A shift captain oversees the paid staff, administratively. Operationally, the shift captains make decisions for call response needs. Typically, on-duty and responding volunteers report to the shift captain for duty assignment and will take command of fires within Gibsonville in the chief's absence.



External Stakeholders

Understanding how the community views the fire department is essential in developing goals and objectives. Community input combined with internal stakeholder's views of the department help to establish a clear picture of how the department should plan to grow in the near future.

The external stakeholders were asked to identify the department strengths and current or potential weaknesses. A questionnaire was sent out in early 2022 via several social media outlets. The most common answers are listed in the chart below.

S

Strengths

- Quick Response
- Professionalism and Dedication
- Compassion and Commitment (Friendly Service)

W

Weaknesses

- Personnel/Staffing
- Town Growth
- Future Town Growth
- Funding
- Equipment

External Stakeholders

The external stakeholders were also asked to rank services, expectations, and concerns based on set choices. The choices for services were based on the current services provided. The options for expectations were based on general fire department practices. The choices for concerns were based on information from the internal stakeholders.

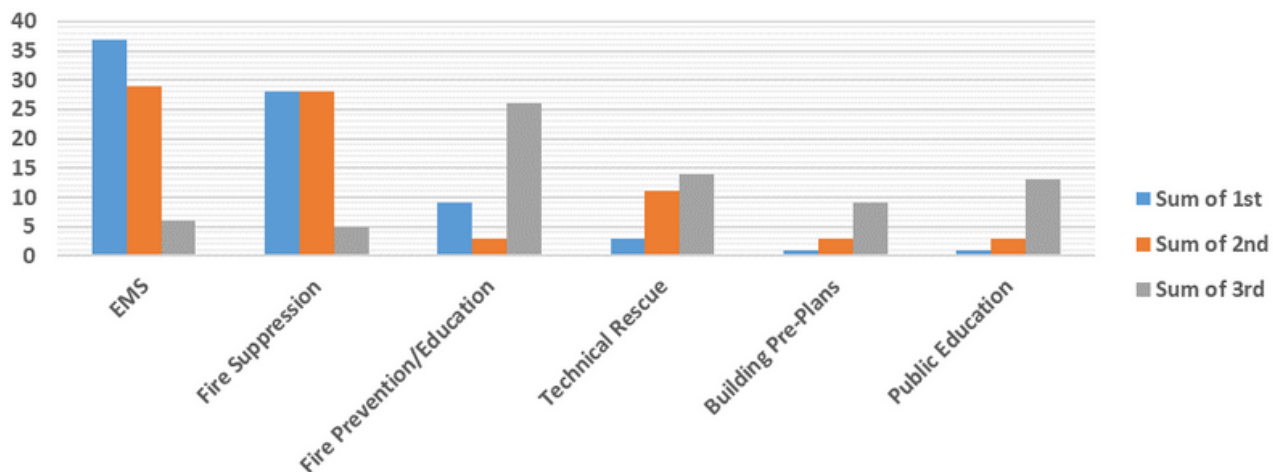
Examining the graph on the next page, you will notice that emergency medical services (EMS) outranks fire suppression. This fire department began with only putting out fires as its sole purpose, and has now evolved into a public safety and medical resource. One essential function is responding to all medical calls in Gibsonville and providing basic life-saving measures until an EMS transport unit can arrive. Our calls for EMS service far outweigh our calls for fires.



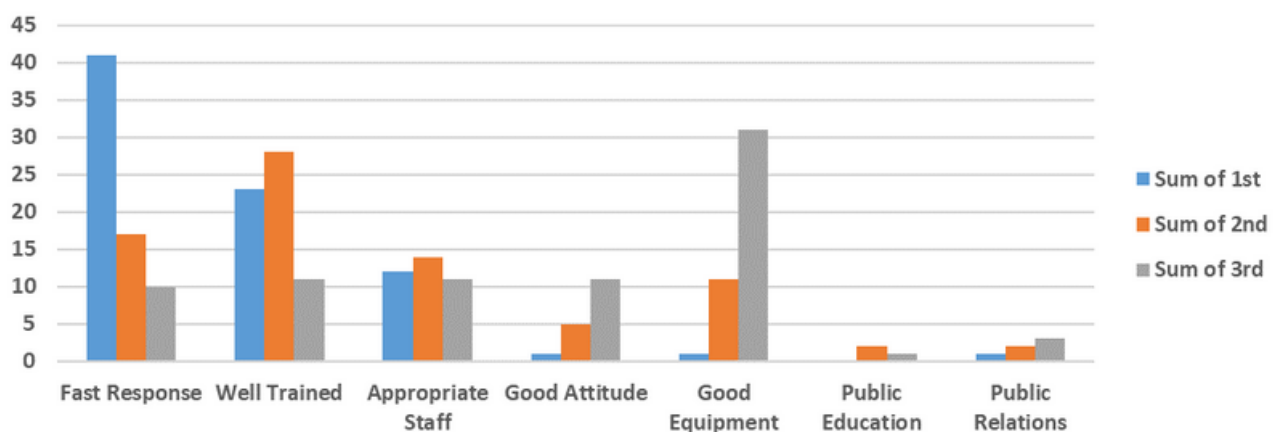
External Stakeholders

Below is the graphed information from the survey questions answered by the external stakeholders:

GRAPH 1 Rank the top three services the Gibsonville Fire Department provides.



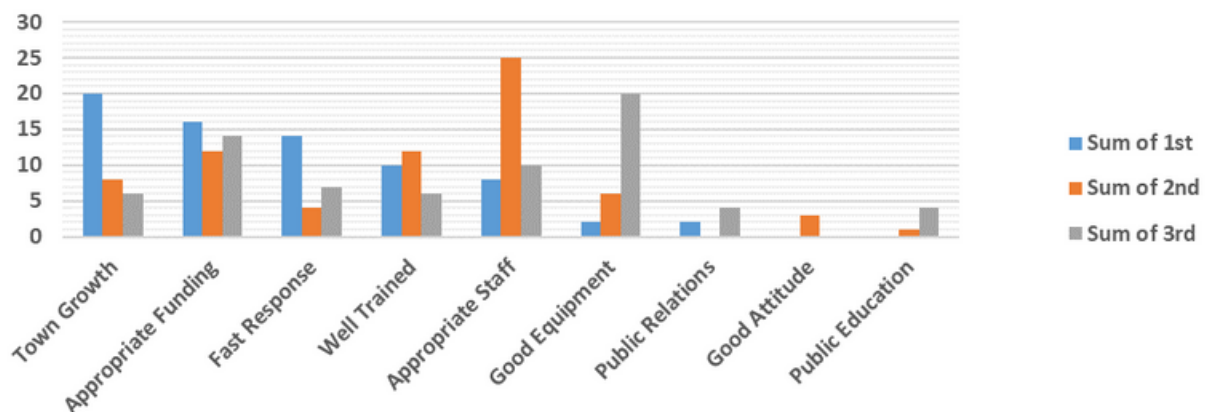
GRAPH 2 Rank your top three expectations of the Gibsonville Fire Department.



External Stakeholders

Below is the graphed information from the survey questions answered by the external stakeholders:

GRAPH 3 Rank the top three concerns with the Gibsonville Fire Department.



Internal Stakeholders

Gibsonville Fire Department is a combination department. The blend of volunteer and paid staff creates different views based on the participatory stakeholder's role within the department. Cohesion between the two groups is essential to fulfilling the department's mission. Paid or volunteer staff provided the information gathered from the internal stakeholders. A SWOC analysis was used to identify internal and external factors affecting success and growth.

Strengths

- First Truck Response Time
- Tactical Knowledge
- Equipment (types, maintenance)
- Training
- Future Planning
- Replacement Program
- Public Events
- Customer Service

Weaknesses

- Overall Staffing
- Depth Initial Incident Command
- Volunteer Training
- Depth Leadership
- Second Call Coverage
- Training Facility
- Volunteer Availability
- Town Growth/Response Time
- No Aerial
- Population

Opportunities

- Budget for Training
- Growth/Increase Tax Base
- Community Outreach
- Good Auto-Aid Relationship
- Elon Training Tower
- Increased Call Volume

Challenges

- Growth Outpaces Personnel
- Dated Infrastructure (water)
- Neighbor Growth
- Decreased Volunteerism
- Automatic Aid Training Level
- Railroad
- Weather
- Old Buildings (school/mill)
- Close/Tall Construction
- FF Selection Pool
- Increased Training Requirement

Goals and Objectives

The strategic plan process also helped to establish goals and objectives that will support the mission of the Gibsonville Fire Department. Goals were selected based on enhancing strengths and improving identified weaknesses in this plan. The process included creating a timeline of progression, staff assignments, and clear goal definitions. Objectives are also listed which directly support achieving the goal.



Goal 1 Anticipate Town Growth and Staffing

Responding to all EMS and fire related calls is the foundation of the fire department, and adequate staffing is essential for successful response rates. The community also expects a fast response to calls, and for this to continue, staffing levels must be sufficient to cover the ever-increasing call volume. The volunteer core has played a significant role achieving rapid response times and overall success of the department. Unfortunately, as with most departments around the country, the call demand is outpacing the availability of volunteers.

To satisfy staffing needs for increased call volume, the department must have a complete picture of town growth. Predicting town growth through active participation in building projects and evaluating potential land annexations is essential to requesting appropriate staffing. The rate of development will increase our call volume significantly and we will need two fully staffed apparatus to meet the demand.

Based on NFPA standards, state requirements for minimum staffing on structure fires, and projected town growth a total of six new firefighters are needed. Staffing numbers must account for vacation, sick days, as well as staffing two trucks to manage non-fire calls. The department relies on automatic aid and mutual aid agreements to meet NFPA requirements for 14 firefighters on a single-family dwelling fire. The agreements also include the need to reciprocate the response coverage to our neighboring departments. Having two staffed trucks per shift will support this effort.

| GOAL 1: Anticipate Town Growth and Staffing | | | |
|---|----------|--|-----------|
| Objective 1A: Monitor town growth to determine personnel need | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 1A.1 | Todd | Assess current building projects | 2022 |
| 1A.2 | Garrett | Track overlapping calls and response times | Ongoing |
| 1A.3 | Garrett | Track volunteer response | Ongoing |
| Objective 1B: Additional Staff | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 1B.1 | Garrett | Study staffing based on call response | Ongoing |
| 1B.2 | Todd | Increased paid staff by 3 | 2025 |
| 1B.3 | Todd | Increased paid staff by 3 (total 6) | 2028 |
| 1B.4 | Todd | Paid Assistant Chief/ Deputy Chief | 2028 |
| Objective 1C: Additional Station | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Task | Timeframe |
| 1C.1 | Garrett | Monitor call times and distribution | Ongoing |
| 1C.2 | Garrett | Monitor automatic aid response | Ongoing |
| 1C.3 | Garrett | Analyze population density | Ongoing |

Goal 2 Apparatus Replacement

The fire truck is a critical component of an effective response system. The Town of Gibsonville has committed to purchase a new fire truck every seven years. This capital planning program rotates a truck out of the fleet every 21 years. Fire trucks built in 2019 required a one-year lead time. However, fire trucks built now have two year lead times from date of order to delivery. A continued successful truck rotation depends upon the truck being ordered by January 2024, with a delivery date of 2026.

Purchasing a ladder truck is expensive and directly affects current response plans. Adding a ladder truck to the fleet should be considered when a response area has five buildings with a needed fire flow of 3,500 GPM, five buildings of at least 35 feet, or a combination of these criteria. The Town has several buildings with water flow needs 3,500 GPM and buildings taller than 35 feet.

A ladder truck is not intended to run routine, non-fire calls. Substituting a ladder truck for an engine truck during the next purchase cycle would place the ladder in the first run position and subsequently shorten the truck's life span. Another option would be to extend the use of the current first-run engine for 14 years and significantly impact the maintenance needs. The predicted increase in population is expected to increase our call volume to over 2000, which will also impact the wear and tear on the first response apparatus.

| GOAL 2: Apparatus Replacement | | | |
|---|----------|---|-----------|
| Objective 2A: Purchase New Fire Engine | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 2A.1 | Shepherd | Assess engine design needs | 2023 |
| 2A.2 | Shepherd | Start purchase order process | 2024 |
| 2A.3 | Todd | Request fund approval based on 2 years build time | 2024 |
| 2A.4 | Todd | Fire truck delivery | 2026 |
| Objective 2B: Study Ladder Truck Purchase | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 2B.1 | Shepherd | Assess need for ladder truck | 2023 |
| 2B.2 | Shepherd | Assess ladder truck design | 2023 |
| 2B.3 | Todd | Research funding sources | 2024 |
| 2B.4 | Todd | Request fund approval based on 2 year build time | 2024 |
| 2B.5 | Todd | Ladder truck delivery | 2026 |

Goal 3 Equipment Replacement

Gibsonville has three types of radios that are used daily. The radios include the station alert system, the apparatus's mobile radios, and the staff's portable radios. We also have several versions of alert devices that paid and volunteer staff use when not at the station. The alert devices consist of pagers and cell phone apps. The Motorola radio system we currently use is aging out, and repair services are limited. Guilford County is reviewing options for radio replacement, and we are participating in this process.

Turnout gear serviceability falls under NFPA 1851, Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting. This standard puts a limit of ten years of use for interior firefighting. Each member is required to have gear that fits properly, is inspected, and is serviceable. The bulk of our turnout gear was purchased in 2018 and will need to be replaced by 2028. Currently, a set of turnout gear costs upwards of \$3,000.

We have upgraded and added several small equipment devices to our fleet to offer the best service. This includes new AEDs, a thermal imaging camera (TIC), electric fans, and a LUCAS device. We have also upgraded our fire hose and nozzles. In 2023, we will evaluate all other small equipment and set a replacement schedule. The evaluation will include the remaining TICs, air monitors, suction devices, lights, and handheld tools.

| GOAL 3: Equipment Replacement | | | |
|---|----------|---|-----------|
| Objective 3A: Radio Replacement | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 3A.1 | Todd | Review portable and mobile radio system replacement options | 2023 |
| 3A.2 | Todd | Join Guilford purchase if available | 2023 |
| 3A.3 | Todd | Secure funds | 2023 |
| 3A.4 | Todd | Purchase radios | 2024 |
| Objective 3B: Turnout Gear Replacement (Helmets Included) | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 3B.1 | Todd | Review turnout gear options | 2026 |
| 3B.2 | Todd | Secure funds | 2027 |
| 3B.3 | Todd | Purchase turnout gear | 2028 |
| Objective 3C: Small Equipment Evaluation | | | |
| 3C.1 | Nikitin | Review current small equipment for serviceability and age | 2023 |
| 3C.2 | Nikitin | Review replacement options | 2023 |
| 3C.3 | Todd | Set replacement schedule and secure funds | 2023 |

Goal 4 Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and Recordkeeping

Community risk reduction (CRR) is the process used to identify local risks, then prioritize efforts to reduce occurrence and impact. Fire prevention has traditionally been the fire department's focus in the effort to protect the community. CRR does not solely focus on house fires and supports the current fire department response system. Our fire department responds to many types of calls other than structure fires. The response includes EMS, falls, and general public services.

The current record management system (RMS) used is Firehouse. Firehouse offers limited data retrieval and analysis. It will be replaced by a new system late in 2023. The new system will allow for easy data retrieval and help develop a picture of what calls we are running and in what area. A clearer picture of response commonalities will help grow the CRR program.

| GOAL 4: CRR and Recordkeeping | | | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| Objective 4A: Record Management System (RMS) | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 4A.1 | Todd | Review RMS system | 2022 |
| 4A.2 | Todd | Join Guilford purchase if available | 2023 |
| 4A.3 | Todd | Secure funds | 2023 |
| 4A.4 | Todd | Purchase system | 2023 |
| 4A.5 | Todd | Review System | 2024 |
| Objective 4B: Community Risk Reduction (CRR) | | | |
| Number | Assigned | Critical Tasks | Timeframe |
| 4B.1 | C. Wyrick | Review current program | 2023 |
| 4B.2 | C. Wyrick | Expand the program based on evaluated need | 2023 |
| 4B.3 | C. Wyrick | Review expansion | 2024 |

Conclusion

The Gibsonville Fire Department will continue to update the strategic plan, supporting the ongoing changes within the town. Our ability to continue to provide exceptional service is of great importance and directly relates to our emergency response capabilities. Staffing needs, response preparedness, and equipment selection addressed in this plan will remain as focus areas for future planning. This strategic plan guides our department's progress and creates a defined plan that everyone can follow.

Documenting progression within the plan will provide a road map of success and point out areas that need reevaluation. All goals and objectives may not be achieved during the 5-year plan; however, their importance to the mission may warrant inclusion in future planning processes. Our mission and vision support the department's commitment to prepare for current and future community needs while continuing to provide the best service possible. We are committed to these basic principles and look forward to many years of dedicated service to the community.

