

Cumru Township Fire Department

Strategic Plan 2016-2020





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Mission Statement

The mission of the Cumru Township Fire Department is to provide the highest level of emergency services and protection to our Township from all hazards through education, awareness and the dedication and service of a well-trained, efficient and effective force of volunteer and career fire fighters.

Vision Statement

As a combination department, the Cumru Township Fire Department will incorporate depth of knowledge and skills from the volunteers and career staff, engender stewardship through the efficient and effective use of resources, and advance public safety through hazard mitigation and fire prevention.



Introduction and Background

This Strategic Plan is designed to provide a guide for management decision-making, resource allocation, and prioritization of projects from 2016 to 2020 for the Cumru Township Fire Department. This is the second five-year strategic plan developed for the Cumru Township Fire Department (CTFD). The Department's progress toward implementing the Plan should be reviewed annually and is intended to be used as a reference document for the evolution of goals for the CTFD. The role of the fire service has changed dramatically since the formation of the municipality and will continue to evolve, just as the Township itself has changed over time.

Cumru Township was founded in 1737 as a roughly square area on the west side of the Schuylkill River, adjacent to the City of Reading. Prior to the industrial revolution, Cumru Township was a Township of the Second Class, consisting primarily of an agrarian economic base interspersed with village population centers focused on post office locations. As manufacturing and the railroad developed, certain areas of the Township moved away from agriculture and into industrial concerns, with worker housing near the factories.

Spring Township broke away from Cumru in 1850. The Boroughs of Mohnton, Shillington, and West Reading were formed from the more intensely developed areas of Cumru, all before 1920. The Borough of Kenhorst was formed in the 1930s. Prior to 1970, Boroughs and Cities were able to annex land from Townships of the Second Class, virtually at will. The City of Reading, which had existed prior to the other municipalities, and the Borough of Shillington invoked this capability to annex several significant portions of Cumru Township in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1969, Cumru changed its form of government to a Township of the First Class, in order to prevent further annexations from occurring.

These takings and secessions by other municipalities are, collectively, the origin of the extremely irregular boundary of Cumru Township over approximately 21 square miles. This bizarre boundary includes two small "islands," disconnected from the rest of Cumru, and completely surrounded by the City of Reading and the Borough of West Reading. In fact, Cumru shares 11 municipal boundaries, more than any other municipality in Berks County. This fact highlights the importance of mutual aid for fire protection in the Township.

Another consequence of annexations important for the fire service has been the transformation of Cumru Township into primarily a bedroom community. Annexations by and formations of other municipalities reduced the land area, especially the commercial, industrial, recreational, and urban areas of Cumru Township, significantly.



In the early part of the 20th century, this reduced the population dramatically. From 1900 to 1940, Cumru's population shrank by 27%. In the second half of the 20th century, with the formation of suburban areas and neighborhoods controlled by homeowners associations, residential construction and population in Cumru Township boomed. From 1950 to 1990, Cumru's population more than doubled. Cumru Township now has a population of approximately 15,000 persons, representing socioeconomic backgrounds of extreme diversity.

Like its population, Cumru Township's topography and development is diverse, ranging from urban to industrial to wilderness. Development is now roughly stratified from north to south into 3 "layers," with industry in the northeastern part of the Township. The northern strata of Cumru is generally urbanized, containing high density residential areas, including apartment buildings. A commercial corridor, with several small shopping plazas, runs through this area along SR 222 and SR 724. The southern strata of the Township is rural, containing large homes using on lot utilities and two entities preserving almost 1,000 acres of forest, Nolde Forest State Park and Mohnton Fish & Game Club. A suburban area, with mostly single family homes on less than 1 acre, provides a transition between these two strata. The extreme northeastern end of the Township, in the area of I-176 and SR 422, is part industrial and part rural. This area includes special hazard locations such as Hafer Petroleum, South Reading Blacktop, and Neversink Mountain.

Because of the diversity of population, topography, and infrastructure, the demand of the fire service in Cumru Township has expanded from fire suppression to vehicle rescue, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and disaster response. With these additional demands comes a greater need for skilled and specific training. Cumru Township has responded to this need by hiring a half-time Training Coordinator. As part of a Federal SAFER Grant, and in fulfillment of a 2010-2015 goal, Cumru Township added a physical fitness facility to the municipal office building. Professional fitness classes and nutrition counseling are available to firefighters. Annual physical examinations are also paid for by the grant.

To serve the present diverse population and businesses of the Township, Cumru derives its fire protection services from three fire stations located throughout the municipality. These three fire stations are manned by volunteers from the consolidated fire department, formation of which was the main goal of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. In 2010, Township ordinance consolidated the firefighters from the three legacy fire companies and reorganized the Board of Directors. Certain assets were transferred to the Township, including apparatus and a fire station.



Since consolidation, Cumru Township leases space from the Gouglerstown Fire Company, now known as Station 1, located in the western part of the Township near the Spring Township border. Likewise, Cumru Township leases space from the Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 of Grill, in the eastern part of the township off of Mt. View Rd. Station 3, as it is known under the consolidated fire department, houses the Township owned tower-ladder apparatus. Station 2, the former Cedar Top Fire Company, is the only Township owned fire station, and the fire station closest to the Township complex, in approximately the geographic center of the Township. It serves as the focus of fire service in the Township, being the most active location for volunteers and readily accessible from the career firefighter offices.

However, despite having been the "youngest" of the legacy fire companies, the Cedar Top Fire Station was established in a building that is now over 100 years old. A former school house, the cornerstone of which dates 1910, the age of this building presents significant challenges for maintenance, operational integrity, and safety. Addressing the adequacy of facilities was the only major goal in the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan not accomplished. Both for the sake of continuity and to minimize maintenance costs, a detailed plan to replace Station 2 has been identified as the highest priority goal in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.



Strategic Planning Process

The Cumru Township Board of Commissioners asked that the Strategic Planning process, begun in concert with the consolidation of the three legacy fire companies, be continued for the next five years. Meetings were held on June 2 and June 10, 2015, to review the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Key Themes. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis of the Key Themes was conducted in order to identify goals. An “All-Hands” meeting of firefighters was held on June 29, 2015, to identify action items associated with the goals.

Participants

FD Board of Directors	Fire Officers	Career Staff	Citizens-at-Large
Commissioner R. O’Leary	Assist. Chief R. Snyder	M. Wenrick	G. Kellenberger
Commissioner E. Gottschall	Dep. Chief B. Silcox	J. Brubaker	D. Yoch
Twp. Manager J. Johnston	Dep. Chief J. Seiger	J. Sallada	
Fire Chief S. Brady	Dep. Chief B. Mohn	J. Batz	
FD Delegate B. Meck	Dep. Chief G. Turner		
FD Delegate G. Brady	Captain A. Hallman		
FD Delegate J. Dietrich	Captain M. Carl		
	Captain K. Heere		
	Captain R. Glahn		



Key Themes

On June 2 and June 10, 2015, some of the questions considered in development of the 2016-2020 Key Themes were:

1. What external factors might impact the Township fire service in the next five years?
2. What is the greatest opportunity approaching the fire service and what should the Township do to capitalize on it?
3. Are there other opportunities for the Fire Service/Township in generating additional revenue?
4. What are the greatest challenges the CTFD will encounter over the next five years?
5. How does the public view the fire service? What opportunities and/or challenges does this provide?
6. What internal obstacles will the fire service encounter in the next five years and how can we overcome them?
7. What should the Township fire organization will look like in 2020?

The following seven Key Themes emerged, some of which are carried over from the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan:

1. Facilities
2. Staffing Levels
3. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention
4. Public Outreach
5. Funding
6. Apparatus
7. Organizational Structure

These key themes were utilized to develop Action items at the June 29, 2015 "All Hands" meeting of the Fire Department.



Key Theme 1: Facilities

Goal: Convene a facilities committee to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for a new facility

The Fire Services Assessment for the Governor Mifflin Fire Service Regionalization Task Force - Cumru Township Report, May 2001, states:

"There are long term needs to replace the station at Cedar Top in the near future (10 years)...Based upon the decision to consolidate, a long term plan is necessary to replace or relocate the Cedar Top Station." (Emphasis by author)

➤ **Action Item: Establish sub-committees for the facilities committee**

An infrastructure sub-committee would make recommendations and comment on facilities supporting a new facility, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, parking, lighting, fire protection, security, and storm water.

A building design sub-committee would make recommendations and comment on facilities used by firefighters, including but not limited to room layout and equipment not directly related to firefighting, but essential to the use of the facility as a whole. Such items could include information technology, bunk room configuration, and common area (training room, meeting room, day room, and kitchen) amenities.

A consolidation sub-committee would make recommendations on transitioning away from the leases of Stations 1 and 3. Such transition planning should include, but is not limited to, discussions of lease terms, a timetable, and appropriate notifications.

Of particular note for the building design and consolidation sub-committees is the current housing of the Cumru Township Fire Police vehicle at Station 3. Discussion should take place on whether or not this vehicle should be housed at a new facility, and, if so, how that would occur.

On August 4, 2015, the Fire Board of Directors (BOD) recommended that work begin on a Request for Proposals/Quotes for a new facility architect. The sub-committees described above would work in concert with (a) professional(s) hired by the Township.

Goal: Obtain estimates for maintenance of Station 2

➤ **Action Item: Fire Chief and Public Works to coordinate scope of work**

The Fire Chief and Public Works staff should obtain evaluations from contractors and appropriate professionals on known maintenance problems with Station 2. Those problems include, but are not limited to, the roof.



Significant repairs were made to the roof in 2009. However, leaks have occurred in 2014 and 2015 which have required additional minor repairs. A determination on the longevity of the current roof is needed. The Fire Board of Directors should then make recommendation(s) on the extent and expense of repairs relative to the potential construction timeframe of a new facility.

Goal: Contingency planning for Station 2 or 3 failure

➤ **Action Item: Fire Chief and Public Works to discuss options**

As noted above, Station 2 has potential significant maintenance issues, including the roof. Roof leaks have also occurred at Station 3. If a significant maintenance issue should occur, such as roof failure, the safety of fire department personnel and the integrity of apparatus could be compromised. Therefore, contingency planning is needed in case of Station 2 or 3 failure.

The only structure capable of housing apparatus, other than a fire station, is the public works building at 1776 Welsh Rd. The Fire Chief and Public Works staff should meet to discuss and document how the public works building could be used in the event of Station 2 or 3 failure, or the failure of both stations simultaneously. Of special concern is alternate housing of the tower/ladder apparatus.

It should be emphasized that contingency housing in the public works building will substantially hinder snow/ice management operations during and after winter storms. Plowing and salting operations will be substantially delayed if public works vehicles and personnel are required to operate outdoors and around fire apparatus. The former Township garage is no longer available since it has been converted to a salt storage building. Finally, housing fire apparatus at public works during winter will inhibit the ability to shelter police cars during winter storms, affecting contingency planning by the police department.

The discussion above illuminates the need to move forward on plans for a new facility.

➤ **Action Item: Fire Board of Directors (BOD) to review options**

The Fire Chief and Public Works staff should forward their proposed contingency plans to the Fire BOD for review and comment.



Key Theme 2: Staffing Levels

Goal: Track staffing in relation to a threshold

➤ **Action Item: Fire BOD to review and recommend threshold definitions**

The Fire BOD should review and discuss threshold definitions for staffing in the unique configuration of Cumru Township's combination department. As described in the 2010-2015 strategic plan document, recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters is an ongoing concern in Cumru Township and nationwide.

The NFPA recommends the following in relation to staffing limitations:

Fire service leaders must continue to collect, analyze and use real incident data when working with decision makers to assess the impact that resource deployment decisions have on community risk levels. Officers must quantify their local fire department experiences including type of emergency events to which they respond, staffing levels/crew size on each incident, mobile asset configurations, response time performance, frequency and manner of personnel training, and fire prevention programs. Fire department leaders should follow rigorous and transparent process to prepare thoughtful and factual reports for decision makers as described in more detail below.

- 1) *Assess Fire Hazards and Associated Risks in the Community - Examine and analyze the relevant risk factors that characterize their community. The assessment should include an analysis of the probability of risk event scenarios that occur and their subsequent consequences.*
- 2) *Collect Response Data - Collect and summarize detailed deployment data, including individual apparatus and overall alarm staffing data from actual emergency response calls to reported (working) structure fires and EMS responses. .*
- 3) *Analyze Response Data - The purpose of this analysis is to determine actual resource deployment capabilities and capacity and identify response deficiencies.*
- 4) *Summarize Emergency Response System Status - The purpose of a status report is to provide detailed information about the current state of fire department capability, availability, capacity, and overall operations. The report should also include options for changes and recommendations that link resource allocations to the anticipated outcomes.*
- 5) *Report to Decision Makers - Prepare a report to decision makers identifying the current fire suppression capability and capacity as well as an assessment of vulnerability based on any proposed resource cuts.*

(From [Fire Service Deployment: Assessing Community Vulnerability](#), Urban Fire Forum 2013, nfpa.org)



Goal: Develop a statement of capabilities or level of service to recommend to the Board of Commissioners

➤ **Action item: Fire Chief and BOD to draft a LOS**

A statement of capabilities or level of service (LOS) would serve as a guide to the review and revision of best practices and policies adopted by the Township for the Fire Department. The above referenced study would provide the information necessary to establish an LOS.

➤ **Action item: Solicitor and Insurance Agent to review draft LOS statement**

Since a statement of capabilities or LOS could be taken into account in a future ISO rating, the Township's insurance consultant and Solicitor should review the document.

➤ **Action item: LOS statement to be presented to the Board of Commissioners**

Goal: Write and adopt personnel/HR policies

➤ **Action Item: Fire Chief and Manager to draft policies**

Since the consolidation of the Fire Department, various policies and procedures have been adopted. The initial focus of these efforts have been operational issues. Additional policies and procedures relative to personnel and human resources issues are needed.

With the advent of a new facility, new policies must be considered. For example, it is anticipated that a new facility will include overnight accommodations. Rules with respect to use of overnight accommodations should be developed as the new facility is being designed.

➤ **Action item: Fire BOD, Solicitor, and Insurance Agent to review draft policies**

➤ **Action item: Policies to be presented to the Board of Commissioners**



Key Theme 3: Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

Goal: Recruit citizens/volunteers for long-term fire service

➤ **Action Item: Provide opportunities for firefighters to articulate factors inhibiting volunteer recruitment**

The Fire BOD should develop a questionnaire for active firefighters, associate members, and families to assist in the identification of factors that facilitate and inhibit recruitment. Examining those elements which support firefighters to engage in service will help to clarify those elements which preclude service. The Fire Chief should examine exit interviews with former Cumru Township Fire Department volunteers to identify patterns related to failure of retention.

➤ **Action Item: Identify ways to mitigate factors inhibiting volunteer recruitment**

The questionnaire responses and exit interview feedback should be reviewed by the Fire Chief and the Fire BOD to succinctly articulate factors negatively and positively affecting recruitment and retention. These factors should be weighted as part of the review process.

➤ **Action Item: Recommend incentives for bringing new people into the volunteer fire service**

After articulating factors affecting recruitment and retention, the Fire Chief and Fire BOD should consider recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for incentives related to volunteer service. It is anticipated that the volunteers and families may themselves generate some incentive suggestions during the questionnaire process. Any proposed incentives should be reviewed by the Solicitor for the effect of any incentives on volunteer status.

➤ **Action Item: Recommend incentives specific to Cumru Township residents for volunteer fire service**

In addition to exploring incentive for volunteer service as a whole, the Fire Chief and Fire BOD should explore and recommend incentives to enhance the number of volunteer firefighters who are also Cumru Township residents. The Township is uniquely in control of certain revenue streams, such as municipal taxation. Any proposed incentives should be reviewed by the Solicitor for the effect of incentives on volunteer status and interaction with other statutes.



➤ **Action Item: Revise and renew new member on-boarding programs**

The Fire Department presently has a Membership Committee which reviews applications and assists the initial integration of a new volunteer into the Department. The structure and operation of that committee should be examined to minimize latency for application review.



Key Theme 4: Public Outreach

Goal: Implement a public education and relations plan and program

➤ **Action Item: Conduct more open houses to promote fire stations as community centers**

Parameters for more frequent open houses should be evaluated by the Fire BOD, including, but not limited to:

- How often should open houses take place? Factors to consider are volunteer availability and public fatigue.
- Where should open houses take place? The Fire BOD should consider whether open houses shall be focused on Station 2, owned by the Township, or rotate among the 3 stations.
- Who will be responsible for set up and manning of open houses? Will the Membership Committee be responsible for coordinating this (see Key Theme 3)?
- Are there other services that can be offered at open houses, which do not detract from, or may even enhance, promotion of the fire service?

Presently, open houses must be coordinated with other entities. At Stations 1 and 3, the respective fire companies must be notified. At Station 2, the Township recreation department must be notified with respect to potential overflow parking at the Warren recreation center. It is anticipated that open houses will be taken into account with the design of a new facility.

➤ **Action item: Provide training programs for the public**

Training for the public would serve to generate appreciation of what firefighters do. It would also enhance opportunities to identify potential volunteers. In addition to fire prevention, education should include:

- Roles in the volunteer fire service.
- Incident management (e.g., steps for clearing an accident, reducing risk during an incident).
- Coordination of firefighting, fire police, and police (e.g., education about detour routes).
- Sources of funding for the fire service
- Why fire apparatus are so expensive (e.g., different types of apparatus).
- Required training for fire fighters.
- Required personal protective equipment for firefighters with demonstrations.



Key Theme 5: Funding

Goal: Explore use of incident fees

➤ **Action Item: Recommend model ordinances**

In recent years, some municipalities have adopted ordinances allowing for an at-fault entity or the beneficiary of fire services to be billed for fire department services. These ordinances remain controversial, both in concept and enforcement. The Fire Chief and Manager should obtain and review model ordinances about incident fees. Included in that review should be any information, if available, about the "enforceability" of such ordinances. The Fire Chief and Manager should then review model ordinance(s) with the Fire BOD, in order to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

Goal: Seek grants

➤ **Action Item: Monitor occurrence of grants**

Grants have been a key component of funding for the Cumru Township Fire Department since 2010, providing incentive funding for the fire officers and duty shifts, installation of a fitness room, and annual physical examinations. Fire officers should continue to monitor occurrence of grants in their respective areas of expertise. The Fire Chief should continue to monitor occurrence of grants for fire stations.

Goal: Update capital plan

➤ **Action Item: Review capital plan annually in September**

The Fire Chief maintains a Capital Plan, including an apparatus replacement schedule, and provides an update to the Board of Commissioners for the upcoming fiscal year. This practice should be continued, with the draft update presented to the Fire BOD for review in September, in order to forward recommendations to the Board of Commissioners during October budget meetings.

Goal: Add to fire savings

➤ **Action Item: Recommend annual addition to fire savings for succeeding year**

The capital planning described above also entails examination of projected savings in the fire tax fund for the next fiscal year. The Fire Chief and Manager should continue this practice in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the fire tax millage. Any recommended changes should



be reviewed by the Fire BOD before presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

➤ **Action item: Recommend for transfer of funds annually**

In each fiscal year, the Fire Chief reviews the status of the fire tax fund with the Business Administrator. The purpose of the review is to determine if the savings projected during the budget process were actually achieved and to make a specific recommendation to the Board of Commissioners on an amount for transfer to the fire savings fund. This practice should continue on an annual basis.



Key Theme 6: Apparatus

Goal: Maintain communications about status of equipment

➤ **Action item: Present repairs to Commissioner Liaisons**

The Fire Chief should report to the Commissioner Liaisons to the Fire Department on apparatus repairs, outside routine maintenance and certification parameters.

Goal: Annual review of apparatus replacement schedule

➤ **Action item: Present annual repair review to BOC**

Along with the draft capital update presented to the Fire BOD for review in September, the Fire Chief should prepare an annual review of apparatus repairs. The intent of such a review would be to elucidate trends, such as repeated breakdown of the same apparatus, in order to justify any necessary adjustments to the Capital Plan.

Goal: Contingency planning for equipment failure

➤ **Action item: Develop a process for determining placement of fire apparatus**

Appendix 16 of the Fire Services Assessment for the Governor Mifflin Fire Service Regionalization Task Force - Cumru Township Report, May 2011, provides an evaluation tool which should be completed for each piece of apparatus in the fleet. This will help determine potential longevity of the apparatus as well as help in determining financing options.



Key Theme 7: Organizational Structure

Goal: Implement an officer development program

➤ **Action Item: Provide opportunities for Fire Officers to articulate educational needs**

The Fire Chief should devote regular segments of officers meetings for the purpose of identifying and addressing development needs. Such needs could include, but are not limited to:

- Leadership, within and outside of command hierarchy
- Public perception, both on and off the fire ground
- Risk management, both on and off the fire ground
- Ethics, integrity, and credibility
- Communication strategies and context
- Policies, procedures, and best practices
- Discipline

The Fire Chief should consult with the Training Coordinator on materials and guest speakers to address these needs.

➤ **Action item: Evaluate volunteer Fire Officer structure**

The Fire Chief should review the volunteer officer structure in relation to the goal of maintaining 24/7 staffing. Any proposed changes should be presented to the Fire BOD. Since changes in structure might result in changes to financial incentives, the Board of Commissioners will have the prerogative of final approval to any new officer structure.

Goal: Evaluate ways to integrate career/volunteer activities

The International Fire Chiefs Association describes what the Cumru Township Fire Department seeks to avoid:

Some departments may deem themselves "combination" simply because they utilize both career and volunteer personnel, but closer examination may show they are organizations in which paid firefighters are segregated from volunteer firefighters and there is little cooperation and integration between the two. This type of system is best described as "dual" rather than combination. Poorly managed "dual" systems often become "duel" systems.

(From Lighting the Path of Evolution: The Red Ribbon Report, International Fire Chiefs Association, Volunteer and Combination Officers Section, November 2005, www.iafc.org)

Integration of career and volunteer staff promotes cohesion and enhances operational effectiveness.



➤ **Action item: Provide conflict resolution training**

Traditional volunteer personnel are credited only for work performed, whereas career firefighters are paid for the *potential* to perform. This type of system is prone to conflict when participants do not clearly understand this difference and their own response to it. The system is vulnerable to group behavior which is a reflection of “us versus them” thought processes, e.g., passive aggressive communication styles. Therefore, integrated training should include communication skills and conflict resolution strategies.

Substantial benefits can be derived from educating all the department members on the strengths and weaknesses of the system and clearly outlining the expectations of all the firefighters. It is important to ensure that career staff members understand they become informal leaders regardless of their rank because of their frequent exposure to emergency calls and the expertise they develop. Thus, every career firefighter is potentially a mentor who is expected to help others, including volunteers, capitalize on opportunities to improve, excel, and build confidence.

(From Lighting the Path of Evolution: The Red Ribbon Report, International Fire Chiefs Association, Volunteer and Combination Officers Section, November 2005, www.iafc.org)

The characteristic vulnerability of a combined department to dissolve into cliques is also justification for maintaining the volunteer incentive levels. Cumru Township is able to partially “level the playing field” through the incentives provided to Fire Officers and Duty Shift personnel.

➤ **Action item: Investigate staffing models in other departments**

The Fire Chief should obtain information from other combination departments with respect to organizational structure. One goal of such information gathering is to identify and consider alternatives for bolstering weekday career staffing.



Appendix A: SWOT Analysis Results

Facilities

Strengths:

Township owned land is available

Weaknesses:

- Stations do not have up to date technology
- Problems staffing aging facilities
- Facilities don't attract personnel

Opportunities:

- Potential long term cost savings through efficiencies
- Ease of staffing – improved facilities would lead to improved recruitment and retention

Challenges:

- Lack of grant opportunities
- Funding strategy undefined
- Future facility location undefined
- Future facility design undetermined
- Station 2 must be maintained until new facility is available
- Decide extent of repairs to station 2, i.e., when is the Township “throwing good money after bad”
- Contingency planning for apparatus in case of station 2 or 3 failure

Goals:

- Obtain estimates for maintenance of station 2
- Contingency planning for station 2 or 3 failure
- Facility committee to make recommendations to BOC for new facility/location

Staff Levels

Strengths:

- training and experience
- Response time
- Versatility
- Improved data gathering on department

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient IT
- Infrastructure – trying to keep 3 station model going
- Lack written personnel/HR policies and procedures
- Inconsistent and insufficient number of responders
- Intradepartmental communication problems



Opportunities:

- More/better data on department - potential to improve tracking of trends
- Potential purchase of document management system

Challenges:

- Availability of personnel is problematic
- Funding for personnel
- Difficult to strike a balance between operations, administration, and volunteer roles
- Suitable facilities must be developed

Goals:

- Write and adopt personnel/HR policies
- Track staffing in relation to a threshold
- Increase staffing
- Develop a statement of capabilities or level of service to recommend to the BOC

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

Strengths:

- Excellent training opportunities
- Funding available for training
- Well develop incentive program
- Medical examination offer
- Physical fitness equipment & programs offer

Weaknesses:

- Lack of school involvement
- Need person to coordinate R&R activities

Opportunities:

- Federal funding available
- Modern facility

Challenges:

- Time require for training
- Develop a bunk-in program

Goals:

- To recruit citizens/volunteers for fire service long-term
- Lobby for tax credits

Public Outreach

Strengths:

- Fire prevention
- Public education



Weaknesses:

- Public perception

Opportunities:

- Public outreach – community events, schools, businesses, civic clubs
- Nation Night Out (Emergency Services)

Challenges:

- Staffing Model
- Services Offered

Goals:

- public awareness
- open houses
- public training
- public programs
- Implement a public education and relations plan and program

Funding

Strengths:

- Good management of relief funds
- Township has a dedicated fire tax
- Incentive money has increased
- Department has made value purchases for apparatus
- Good in-house maintenance of apparatus
- Fees for fire safety inspections implemented
- Capital funding program developed

Weaknesses:

- Uncertain economy

Opportunities:

- Applied for additional SAFER grant for subsidizing incentive funds
- Billing for incidents possible

Challenges:

- Need agreement on how to spend capital funds
- If/when SAFER grant runs out, how to maintain incentive money
- Where/how to access additional grant money

Goals:

- Explore incident fees
- Update capital plan
- Add to capital fund annually
- Seek grants
- Assess the adequacy of the fire tax



Apparatus

Strengths:

- Improved fleet management

Weaknesses:

- Equipment not located properly relative to operations

Opportunities:

- Development of new combination pieces
- Township has accumulated funds for new equipment

Challenges:

- Locating equipment properly relative to operations
- Alternate housing for apparatus undetermined
- Apparatus replacement in 2020 to be decided

Goals:

- Maintain communications with BOC about equipment
- Annual review of apparatus replacement schedule
- Contingency planning for equipment failure
- Contingency planning for housing equipment in case of station failure

Organization Structure

Strengths:

- Organizational structure in place

Weaknesses:

- Historical difficulty filling officer positions

Opportunities:

- Recent appointment of 3 captains

Challenges:

- Lack of Fire Officer development programming

Goals:

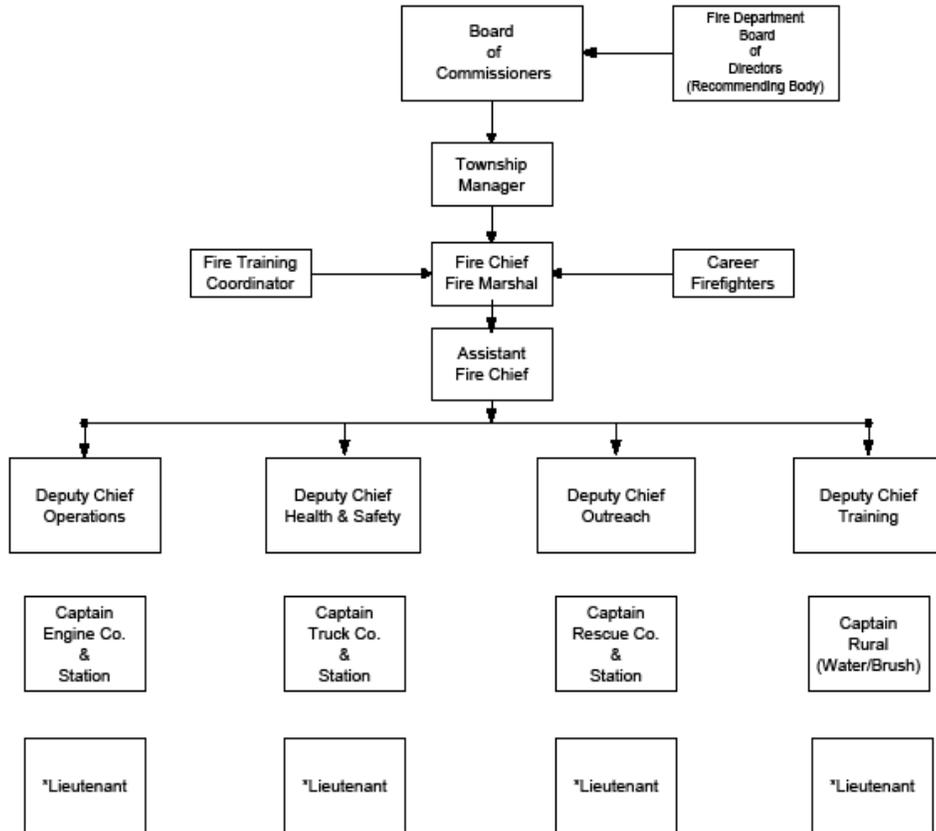
- Implement an officer development program
- Evaluate volunteer officer structure with focus on alternatives for maintaining 24x7 officer staffing
- Evaluate ways to better integrate career/volunteer activities to promote cohesion
- Investigate staffing models in other departments to find feasible alternatives for bolstering weekday career staffing



Appendix B: Organizational Chart

Cumru Township Fire Department

Administrative Organization 08-20-13



* As needed or assigned to apparatus unit
Captains will report to Deputy Chief for their functional responsibility.