



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FIRE DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

Office of the Chief



2023 was a very busy year for the Findlay Fire Department. The three overarching themes throughout the year were personnel, facilities and training, as we made bold progress on all of them.

The most vital part of any organization is personnel, and within the Findlay Fire Department it is no different. 2023 contrasted greatly with the previous year—in 2022 the Findlay Fire Department did not hire a single new firefighter—as we brought a total of 8 new firefighters on board. These new employees replaced retired personnel, representing over 12% of the entire fire department workforce. Hiring even one new firefighter entails a lot. Entrance tests, background checks, interviews, uniform & gear orders, onboarding and basic training can take as long as 6 months, and multiplying that by 8 is an exceptional demand on the department. While it is important to recognize the loss of experience when retirements occur, it's truly exciting to watch new, eager firefighters begin their careers.

From a facilities standpoint, 2023 saw major progress on the construction of the city's STRICT Center, which is the fire department-operated public safety training facility. The complex includes two buildings—the training building and the burn building—and both were constructed in 2023. The Training Building is a large steel building with a drive-through training bay, a classroom, restrooms & shower facilities and a storage mezzanine. The Burn Building is 3-story building, plus a 40-foot rappelling tower, constructed of modular shipping containers created to withstand live fire training. While finishing touches are still needed, by the end of 2023 the STRICT Center was approximately 90% complete. Public support for this facility is outstanding, with just over half of the final \$2.4 million cost coming from donations or grants. The facility will serve Findlay and Hancock County for decades, and local first responders are eager to sharpen their skills in this unique training complex.

Training of Findlay Fire Department personnel is always a priority, and despite the time commitment to hiring new firefighters and overseeing the STRICT project, 2023 was no different. The department took the first deliberate step to enhance our overall hazardous materials (hazmat) response capability when 16 firefighters completed a 40-hour hazmat technician course. Two additional classes are planned for 2024 to include the remainder of the department, and we complimented the training with additional 4-gas meters on the engines. We also hosted a fire instructor course, which included 12 Findlay Fire employees. A “train the trainer” course on structural search techniques and sending two firefighters to a peer support training class rounded out our specialized training courses. All of these are in addition to our ongoing commitment to EMS and fire-related training courses held throughout the year.

Our firefighters contributed to the progress of the fire department and support to the community in unique ways in 2023. Two firefighters applied for a grant on behalf of the department, and were awarded nearly \$22,000 to replace all of the firefighting nozzles carried on our apparatus. All of the crews at Fire Station 2 chipped in with talent and labor in order to replace the entire speaker & PA system in that station, greatly improving the ability to hear radio traffic and dispatchers. One of our Battalion Chiefs spearheaded a successful grant opportunity to obtain 4 ballistic vests and trauma/triage bags to each front-line engine. Finally, the firefighters' union supported the community through a golf outing fundraiser, donating nearly \$9,000 in proceeds to Children's Mentoring Connection. Another grant helped us to replace 65 sections of fire hose, which was greatly needed.

In the following pages you'll find a summary of our activities from last year, and a general overview of fire department operations. Please look it over, and if you have any questions please contact us in the Fire Administration Office at 419-424-7129 or email fireadmin@findlayohio.gov.

KEY ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2023 Achievements

- Hired 8 firefighters to replace retired or resigned personnel.
- 5 of the new firefighters were sent to Ohio Fire Academy for FF II basic training.
- 16 firefighters completed a 40-hour Hazmat Technician/WMD training course.
- 12 firefighter or officers completed the Fire Instructor course through BGSU State Fire School.
- Added 4 Ballistic Vests & 2 Trauma/Triage EMS bags to each front-line engines.
- Findlay Fire personnel replaced the fire station 2 speaker system, including amplifier, speaker wire and speakers.
- Replaced 65 sections of fire hose, moving our department into compliance with NFPA fire hose replacement recommendations.
- Replaced 4 fire hose nozzles on every fire truck -- approximately \$21,600 worth of equipment -- through the Firehouse Subs Foundation.
- Received \$5,000 in funding for Camp 911 from the Hancock County Firefighters Association golf outing.
- Two firefighter attended the 2-day OAPFF/IAFF Peer Support Training Course.
- Purchased two 4-Gas detection meters and a meter calibration system.
- Findlay Firefighters Union --IAFF Local 381-- raised nearly \$9,000 for Children's Mentoring Connection through their golf outing fundraiser.
- Conducted a "Train the Trainer" course from Squad 5 Fire Training in search techniques, which included 4 personnel from each shift. This was held in houses slated for demolition in cooperation with Findlay YMCA.
- Promoted Firefighter Nick Scoles to a vacant Fire Captain position.
- Completed implementation of all fire personnel into the Findlay City Schools "SafeDefend" instant notification system for Active Shooter/Threat incidents, and conducted initial training on response plans.
- Replaced the HVAC system at Fire Station 2.

BUDGET



\$8,134,776

PERSONAL SERVICES

This includes wages, overtime, pension, healthcare, etc.

\$535,809

OPERATIONS

This includes utilities, fuel, tools etc.

25%

CITY BUDGET

Dedicated to the Fire Service.

2023

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Replaced the roof covering at Fire Station 2.

Continued with STRICT Center construction: the Training Building is complete, and the Burn Building has been ordered.

Replaced 6 mobile radios in our fire apparatus (AFG Grant).

Installed a new SCBA compressor and fill station at Fire Station 4 (AFG grant).

STAFFING



STAFFING

65 SWORN PERSONNEL

Includes: 61 Suppression Personnel - Firefighters, Captains & Battalion Chiefs, 2 - Fire Prevention personnel, 1 - Assistant Chief, 1 - Fire Chief + 1 - Administrative Assistant (not sworn)

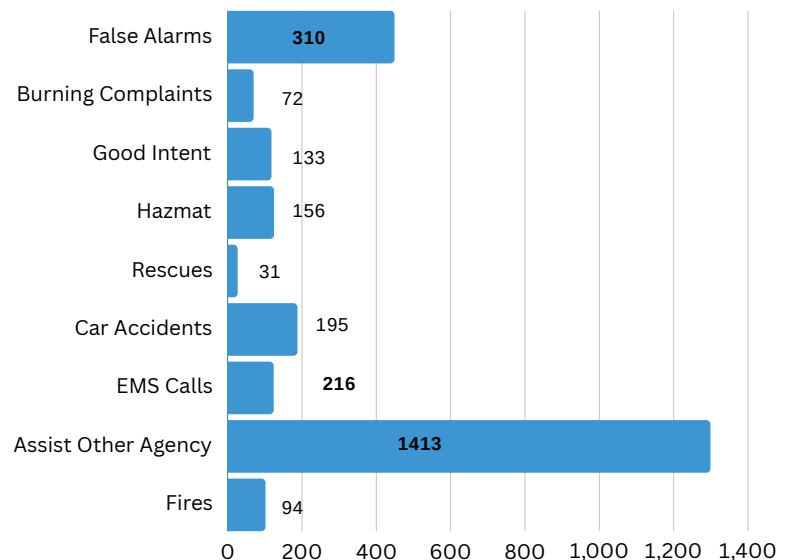
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AVERAGE DAILY MANPOWER

Of suppression personnel.

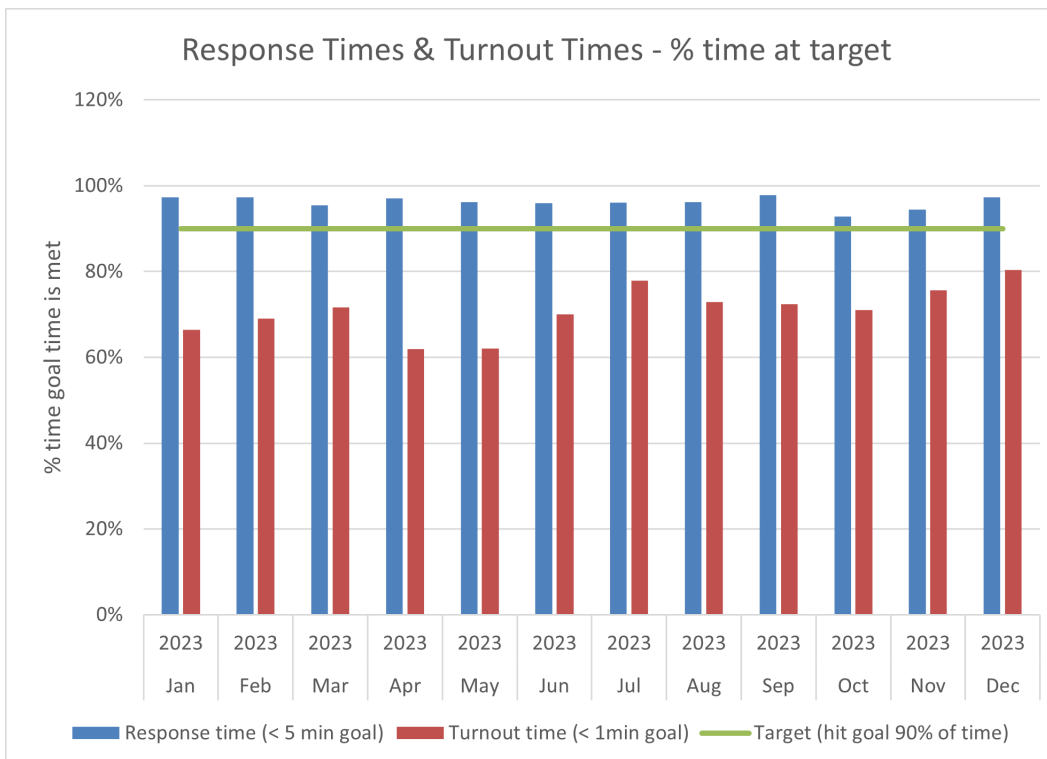
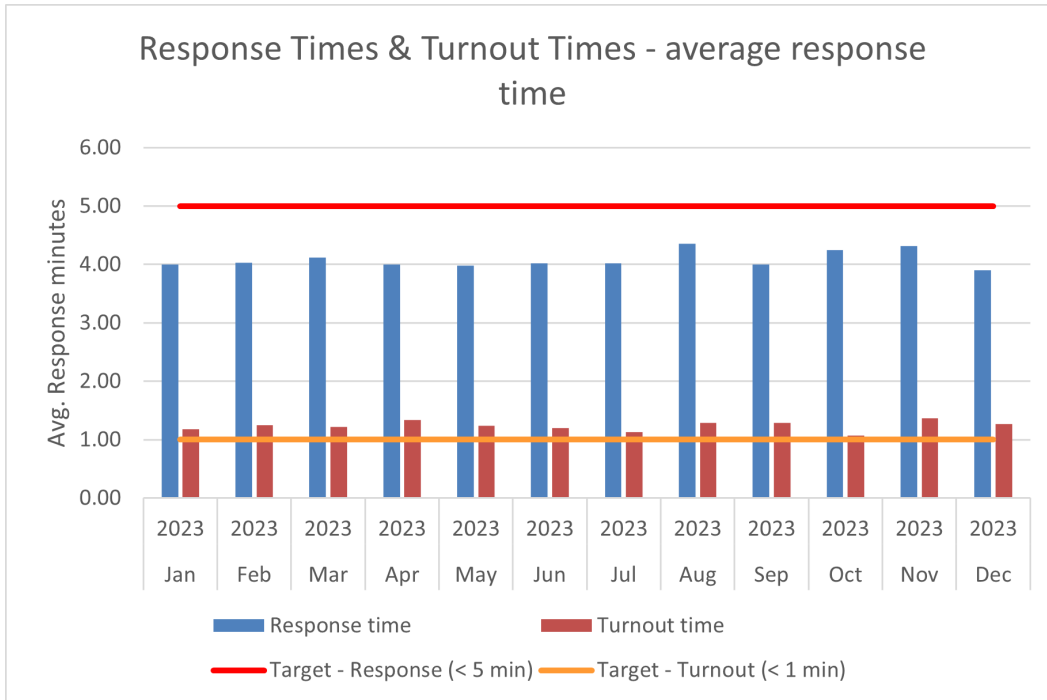
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CALLS FOR SERVICE



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Our Key Performance Indicator Targets are to meet a 5 minute response time and a 60 second turnout time, 90% of the time.



BUDGET SUMMARY

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND OPERATIONS

BUDGET	2021 ACTUAL	2022 ACTUAL	2023 ORIG BUD	2023 PROJECTION	2024 REQUEST	\$ change 2024/2023 BUDGET	% change 2024/2023 BUDGET
Personal Services	\$ 7,222,075	\$ 7,469,820	\$ 8,347,186	\$ 8,134,776	\$ 8,740,851	\$ 393,665	4.72%
Other	\$ 1,228,692	\$ 1,143,957	\$ 516,759	\$ 535,809	\$ 511,712	\$ (5,047)	-0.98%
TOTAL	\$ 8,450,767	\$ 8,613,777	\$ 8,863,945	\$ 8,670,585	\$ 9,252,563	\$ 388,618	4.38%

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Contractual raise for all employees.
- 3 new firefighters to fill 2024 retirements.
- Implementing a part-time Fire Inspector.
- Budgeted overtime for 2 - 40 hour HazMat Classes.
- Budgeted for 15 sets of turnout gear to replace outdated sets.



STAFFING LEVEL	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total FT	65	65	65	65	65

2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Replaced the roof covering at Fire Station 2.
- Continued with STRICT Center construction; the Training Building is complete, and the Burn Building has been ordered.
- Replaced 6 mobile radios in our fire apparatus (AFG grant).
- Installed a new SCBA compressor and fill station at Fire Station 4 (AFG grant).

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Hired 8 firefighters in 2023 to replace retired or resigned personnel.
- 5 of the new firefighters were sent to the Ohio Fire Academy for Firefighter II basic training.
- 16 Firefighters completed a 40-hour Hazmat Technician/WMD training course.
- 12 firefighters or officers completed the Fire Instructor course through BGSU's State Fire School.
- Added 4 Ballistic Vests and 2 Trauma/Triage EMS bags to each front-line engines.
- Findlay Fire personnel replaced the fire station 2 speaker system, including amplifier, speaker wire and speakers.
- Replaced 65 sections of fire hose, moving our department into compliance with NFPA fire hose replacement recommendations.
- Replaced 4 fire hose nozzles on every fire truck--approximately \$21,600 worth of equipment--purchased through the Firehouse Subs Foundation.
- Received \$5,000 in funding for Camp 911 from the Hancock County Firefighters Association golf outing.
- Two firefighters attended the 2-day OAPFF/IAFF Peer Support Training course.
- Purchased 2 "zero visibility" fog/smoke machines to create realistic training scenarios.
- Purchased two 4-Gas detection meters and a meter calibration system.
- Findlay Firefighters Union--IAFF Local 381-- raised nearly \$9,000 for Children's Mentoring Connection through their golf outing fundraiser.
- Conducted a "train the trainer" course from Squad 5 Fire Training in Search Techniques, which included 4 personnel from each shift. This was held in houses slated for demolition in cooperation with the Findlay YMCA.
- Promoted Firefighter Nick Scoles to a vacant Fire Captain position.
- Completed implementation of all fire personnel into the Findlay City School's "SafeDefend" instant notification system for Active Shooter/Threat incidents, and conducted initial training on response plans.
- Replaced the HVAC system at Fire Station 2.

2024 OBJECTIVES

- Train the remaining fire department in a Hazmat Technician/WMD course. The first of two classes is scheduled for January 22-26, 2024.
- Complete construction of the STRICT Center training facility project.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS



PUBLIC RELATIONS

The department continues to promote positive public relations with the residents of not only Findlay, but Hancock County as well.



C- Shift visiting with the kids from Nazarene Home School group. They learned about fire safety and had got to see the how the fire trucks work.



Cub Scout Pack 334 completed their fire safety challenge! The scouts had to test their smoke detectors, check the detectors date to insure it was not more than 10 years old, practice their escape plan and remember to sleep with their bedroom doors closed. They were rewarded with pizza.

Firefighters visited with Kan-Du Studios. They talked a little bit about fire safety and the crew demonstrated what they look and sound like all geared up.



PUBLIC RELATIONS



2023 was the sixth year for Camp 911. The Fire Department teamed up with the Findlay Police Department, Hancock County Sheriff's Office, Hanco EMS, Hancock Public Health and City of Findlay Recreation to bring the safety camp to 200 children in Hancock County and the City of Findlay.



SPOTLIGHT STORY



During Fire Prevention week in October, B-Shift Crew visited Northview Elementary and spoke with the students about fire safety. They showed the students how they look & sound in full turnout gear while enforcing the importance of smoke detectors in homes. One little boy took the conversation seriously and spoke to his mom about getting smoke detectors in their home. Mom called the Red Cross, who in turned called us. We were at the family's home the following week to install smoke detectors. We are happy to be a part of this partnership with the Red Cross, proud of our team for educating this young man, but most importantly inspired by a mother / son team who listened and followed through on this important safety topic!

TRAINING

Each month there is an effort to provide one formal training class in any number of fire/rescue topics, in addition to one formal EMS class. There are numerous company or shift-based training sessions that are assigned. On top of this there is additional mandatory street school training and Standard Operating Procedures review.

Standard Operating Procedures are defined processes that our department adhere to. These practices are created through national standards and years of experience. They ensure that a task is done the same by two different people. This reduces risks to firefighters and creates consistency in day to day operations and emergency response.

Each new recruit is required to complete 40 hours of emergency driver / operator training, which is part of the Firefighter I & II class while at the Ohio Fire Academy, and at least 12 driving hours in a non-emergency setting once they are assigned to a shift.



Sample list of 2023 training topics:

- Cardiovascular Emergencies
- Principles in Pharmacology
- Geriatric Emergencies
- Trauma Emergencies
- Patient Assessment
- Pediatric Assessment & Trauma
- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
- Ohio Trauma Triage
- Pregnancy Medical Emergencies
- Communicable Disease
- VEIS Strategy
- Hoseline Advancement
- Fireground - Search & Rescue
- Self Rescue & Bail-Out
- Extrication Familiarization
- Active Shooter Training

TRAINING

Our approach to formal training was slightly different this year than in the past, but it may be a sign of things to come. With the STRICT Center training facility coming on line in 2024, we have the opportunity to host local and regional classes more effectively than ever before.

With the need for additional certified fire instructors to facilitate training at the new complex, we hosted BGSU's State Fire School Fire Instructor course here in Findlay. 12 of our personnel completed this course and only need some final "teachback" hours to be certified instructors. Having additional instructors within our department not only helps us internally, it also opens more opportunities to train other fire departments at the STRICT Center in the future.

We are always looking for more effective and efficient ways to serve the public, and one area we felt could be improved was our department-wide capability when responding to hazardous materials calls. The Findlay Fire Department houses the Hancock County Hazmat Trailer and some of our personnel are part of the county-wide hazmat team, but as a department our response capability was lacking. Partnering with the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC), we devised a plan to bring the training level for our entire department up to the Hazmat Technician level, rather than simply the Operations level.

The LEPC provided a 40-hour Hazmat Tech/Weapons of Mass Destruction class, and 16 Findlay Fire personnel completed this along with some county-based firefighters. Step 2 of this plan is for the Findlay Fire Department to provide two additional classes in early 2024, paid for with a PUCO hazmat training grant. When it's all done, the Findlay Fire Department will officially provide hazmat technician response and be able to quickly assist other county fire departments in similar calls.

Our formal training—outside instructors or certification classes—compliments our in-house "informal" training. The vast majority of our training hours are informal and occur at the company or shift level. While it may not always be groundbreaking training topics, informal training is where firefighters hone their skills and build proficiency on a wide variety of firefighting and EMS skills.

20,000+

FIRE TRAINING HOURS

Includes Formal and Informal Training hours.

1500+

EMS TRAINING HOURS

Formal Hours received through Hanco, In-house instructors and online through 24/7.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU



The Fire Prevention Bureau consists of two firefighters who are certified as Fire Investigators and Fire Safety Inspectors. This team focuses on code enforcement, public fire and life safety education, fire investigations, building inspections and plan review.

The team also participates as a member of the Planning Commission and the Crime Prevention Association. They also conduct educational programs such as live fire extinguisher training and life safety education classes.

825 PEOPLE

WENT THROUGH FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING

From University Students to Senior care agencies. All took a course to learn how to use a fire extinguisher correctly to save lives and property.

1880+ PEOPLE

PARTICIPATED IN SAFETY PRESENTATIONS

From school groups to non-profit organizations. All listened to various, fine tuned topics regarding fire safety protocols.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU - FIRE SAFETY WEEK



The Fire Prevention Bureau worked hard this year to promote the importance of smoke detectors. Through the Fire Prevention week and beyond, the Bureau worked on a public campaign to build awareness. Facebook posts were made with smoke detectors from local business and firefighters. A billboard was up for the week and a notice in water bills went out to the community.

Eric Wilkins partnered with the Red Cross to start a new program for installation of Smoke Detectors in homes in Findlay. The Red Cross would provide the detectors and Firefighter crews will install. The program started in October 2022.

218

**SMOKE DETECTORS
INSTALLED**

January - December 2023

83

**HOMES VISITED FOR SMOKE
DETECTOR INSTALL**

January - December 2023



OBJECTIVES FOR 2024

Forecasting our year for 2024, the main goal is to wrap up the STRICT Center facility. This project has been in the works, either behind the scenes or in full view, since 2018. Final touches at the training complex planned for the first half of the year include final concrete, signage, training prop construction, landscaping and additional exterior lighting on the training grounds. Those visible things are important, but just as vital are the creation of policies and procedures, training outlines and record keeping processes. These latter items are currently being developed. They receive little or no fanfare, but in order to maximize the benefits of the STRICT Center, these must be as much a part of our training environment as the brick and mortar.

The Findlay Fire Department also has new employees starting early in 2024. Three firefighters will begin their careers in anticipation of retirements coming up in the Spring & Summer. Getting them started in a compressed amount of time will be difficult, but worth it in order to get them in training as soon as possible.

Other topics up for discussion or implementation in 2024 are starting the discussion about a replacement fire truck, HVAC system replacement and commercial window replacements. Unique events that require a lot of preparation, such as the total solar eclipse in April, are also on the agenda.

In closing, 2024 looks to be a continuation of a very busy 2023. As always, our commitment will be one of dedication to our profession and providing the best service we can to the public.

Training & Technology & Personnel

- 2 - 40 hour HazMat Classes.
- Contractual raise for all employees
- 3 new firefighters to fill 2024 retirements.
- Implement a part-time Fire Inspector.

Equipment & Structures:

- Replace 15 sets of outdated turnout gear.
- Complete construction of the Strict Center training facility project.